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# HORACE MANN HIS IDEAS AND IDEALS

By

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Editor of the Journal of the National Education Association

National Home Library Foundation  
Sherman F. Mittell, Editor  
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## CONTENTS

PREFACE .....	vii
<b>PART I—A LIFE AND AN EPOCH</b>	
<i>The Significance of Horace Mann</i> .....	3
<i>Forty-One Years of Preparation</i> .....	5
<i>Champion of a Great Cause</i> .....	14
<i>The After Years</i> .....	28
<i>Estimates of Horace Mann's Life</i> .....	33
<b>PART II—THE LECTURE ON EDUCATION</b>	
<i>A Folk Lecture</i> .....	43
<i>Methods of Teaching</i> .....	54
<i>Purposes of Education</i> .....	90
<b>PART III—THE LETTER TO SCHOOL CHILDREN</b>	
<i>An Invitation and a Reply</i> .....	105
<i>A Purpose for Everything</i> .....	108
<i>Things To Avoid</i> .....	112
<i>Things To Do</i> .....	115
<b>PART IV—IDEAS AND IDEALS</b>	
<i>Life and Character</i> .....	123
<i>Schools and Education</i> .....	131
<i>Democracy and Citizenship</i> .....	142
<i>Health and Happiness</i> .....	149



## PREFACE

Horace Mann, born less than twenty years after the Declaration of Independence, knew personally in his boyhood the veterans who had helped to hallow the battlefields around Boston. The unhappy War of 1812 came within the period of his young manhood. The nation was struggling to establish itself and to prove the possibility of selfgovernment to a doubting world.

In 1837 when Horace Mann came to the secretaryship of the Massachusetts newly-created Board of Education, a financial panic dominated the nation. Fear, greed, and confusion were everywhere. Unemployment, misery, and distress prevailed. Schools were poor, teachers unprepared and underpaid. The well-to-do were sending their sons and daughters to private schools. They felt little or no concern for the public schools which they thought only good enough for paupers. In such a time people needed especially to place a higher value upon themselves—to attach more importance to the homely virtues and to thinking as a way of life. In 1837 the time had come for an educational revival. Horace Mann—himself up from the soil—came forward to express the needs of the people in a language so clear that his writings are an important part of the national culture.

Horace Mann gave his life to the improvement of education thru universal, tax-supported, free, public schools in charge of carefully chosen and especially pre-

pared teachers. During 1936-37 the 100th anniversary of Horace Mann's coming to the secretaryship will be celebrated thruout the country. This book is a part of that celebration.

The aim here is to provide an introduction to both the life and writings of Horace Mann. It is hoped that this book will appeal to parents, taxpayers, highschool students, teachers: to all who would understand the full significance of universal free public education.

One special word to the reader: The writings of Horace Mann are best read in a leisurely spirit. Rapid reading—useful for exploratory study—may not give time for the assimilation of his great thoughts.

Credit—of which one can never give enough—is here in order: To J. W. Crabtree, Secretary Emeritus of the National Education Association, himself a builder like Horace Mann, for encouraging the plan to celebrate the Centennial; to Willard E. Givens, Secretary of the National Education Association, for making it possible for me to do this work; to Sherman F. Mittell, who as president and editor of the National Home Library Foundation encouraged the preparation of this book; to Eleanor Craven and Elizabeth Jett for exceptionally fine help in gathering and organizing the material; and particularly to my good wife, Frances Willard, who thru the years has shared my faith in education and democracy.

Joy ELMER MORGAN.

Washington, D. C., October 1936.

**PART I**

**A LIFE AND AN EPOCH**

## THE LIFE OF HORACE MANN

May 4, 1796 Born, Franklin, Massachusetts.  
1819 Graduated from Brown University.  
1821 Entered law school, Litchfield, Connecticut.

Dec. 1823 Admitted to the Norfolk bar; opened law office in Dedham.  
1827 Elected to Massachusetts House of Representatives.

Sept. 29, 1830 Married Charlotte Messer, daughter of the President of Brown University.

Aug. 1, 1832 Death of first wife, Charlotte Messer Mann.  
1836 Elected president, Massachusetts State Senate.

June 29, 1837 Appointed Secretary of the newly-created Massachusetts Board of Education.

July 1, 1837 (Saturday) "This day I consider the first on which my official character as Secretary of the Board commences."

July 3, 1839 Opened the first public normal school in America at Lexington, Massachusetts.

May 1, 1843 Married Mary Peabody, later his biographer.  
1843 Visited the schools of Europe.  
1848 Succeeded John Quincy Adams in the U. S. House of Representatives.

Sept. 15, 1852 Appointed President of Antioch College.  
Aug. 2, 1859 Died at Antioch College.

## PART I

### A LIFE AND AN EPOCH

#### *The Significance of Horace Mann*

FAITH in the common man and a determination to give him equality of opportunity is America's unique contribution to history. This desire has been called the American Dream. Because of our efforts at equality of opportunity our country has developed faster and farther than any other in all history. The major factor in this development has been the common school, the living embodiment of the spirit that made us a nation, the very symbol of our freedom. The school has awakened aspiration, established ideals, trained skills, and formed character. It is of the people, by the people, and for the people.

The contribution of Horace Mann in establishing the schools was so fundamental that he is known as the Father of the American Public School. Colonel F. W. Parker, himself one of the major prophets of American education, held a firm conviction that Horace Mann ranks with Washington and Lincoln as one of the greatest builders of the nation. "Washington and Lincoln," he wrote, "represent the highest types of heroism, patriotism, and wisdom in great crises of republic-building; Horace Mann, the quiet inner building, the soul development of the nation."

The writers of history have given themselves mostly to the doings of the great ones of earth. But Horace Mann saw deeper. To him it was clear that if a nation is to have great men it must have a great and noble people to inspire and support them. Every boy and girl must be awakened to the worth of himself, must be led to assume responsibility for his own destiny, must be trained in purpose, taste, and skill until he can stand alone, asking no special favors or privileges.

The common school—given new life by Horace Mann's leadership—created the idealism and the feeling of national destiny necessary to national union. Mann had led the movement for civic education. The Declaration of Independence and the Constitution had been introduced into the schools; patriotic pieces were declaimed on public occasions. The school became the House of the People.

When Horace Mann was born in 1796 George Washington was still president. The young Republic was trying to get started. The ideal of democracy was fighting for its very life. Critics on both sides of the ocean prophesied its early doom. The wonder is that with centuries of despotism and special privilege woven into the lives of men, our forefathers should have had the courage to try a new form of government.

Horace Mann saw clearly that the American experiment at self-rule could not hope to succeed without universal education emphasizing the highest moral, civic, and cultural values. He saw that there could be no real equality or democracy unless people had the opportunity

to develop their talents and their tastes. If you want confirmation of that statement, if you want to see the real importance of the American school, ask yourself what hope there would be today for the children of any poor family if the boon of free schooling were denied them.

The American school is rising to meet the needs of the new day. It is holding young people longer in school. Its teachers are better prepared. Its curriculum is more carefully selected. And it is reaching rapidly upward into tax-supported education for the adult citizen. The growth of the educational enterprise is strikingly shown in the expansion of the high school which in round numbers enroled 200,000 in 1890; 500,000 in 1900; a million in 1910; 2 million in 1920; 5 million in 1930; and 7 million in 1936. The school has become the nation's major enterprise, in which one in four of the total population is now engaged as teacher or student. To have more than thirty million young people working full time at the task of improving their lives offers immense possibilities particularly as their minds are held to ideals of sound personal character, worthy achievement, and honorable civic participation. The foundations of this great cultural enterprise were laid by Horace Mann.

### *Forty-One Years of Preparation*

Teaching differs from most occupations in this: that all one has and is goes into the process. Every phase of

Horace Mann's life went into the foundation of his after-work: the poverty of his boyhood, the high ideals of his parents, his experiences as a student, his observations as a lawyer at the bar and as a statesman in the legislature—all these gave him a deepening conviction of the importance of excellence of character as the foundation of all life and government. That we may better understand his work as an educator, let us turn for a moment to a study of these foundation years.

The life story of Horace Mann is the history of an epoch. During his boyhood at the turn of the century, changes were taking place in the young Republic which were to prepare the way for his leadership in the public-school movement. With the achievement of independence and the setting up of a new government, a spirit of national consciousness prevailed. The country had settled down to work. The great West which had hitherto been a vast unbroken land, wild and savage, had begun to stir the imagination of all. In the East the growth of factories and other industrial enterprises was bringing the laboring men closer together. They began to see that they would need education if they were to improve their lot.

The spirit of reform was everywhere. A great temperance crusade was in progress; the abolition of slavery in which Mann was later to take part was gaining headway; new ideas of human freedom were beginning to take root so that Emerson wrote "We are all a little wild here, with numberless projects of social reform. Not a reading man but has a draft of a new community in

his waistcoat pocket." In literature this was the American Golden Age, the period of Longfellow, Lowell, Emerson, Whittier, Thoreau, Irving, Bryant, Greeley, Holmes, Hawthorne, Bronson and Louisa Alcott, Poe, and others.

In such an epoch Horace Mann and his followers were destined to lay the foundations for cultural democracy. No other age in all history could have given to a single lifetime such a wide range of personal experience and observation, with such rise from modest surroundings to so noble an opportunity for service and achievement.

Most of the world's great teachers have come from poor surroundings. They learned in childhood to accept the world as it is, to do their part, to use their own eyes and ears and hands, to dare, and to do. All these were the boyhood lot of Horace Mann, the fourth child and third son of a devoted mother. He was born May 4, 1796, on a farm near Franklin, Massachusetts, some thirty miles from Boston—a New England farm with Puritan ideals of strict morality and plain living.

There were early struggles aplenty. There was abundant opportunity to develop the virtues that necessity breeds. The death of his father, Thomas Mann, when Horace was but thirteen left him to a youth of poverty and hardship. In addition to the chores of the farm, he helped his mother braid straw for nearby hat factories. Play hours were earned by extra exertions in completing work ahead of time. Altho the "rugged nursing of Toil" gave him an appreciation of the value of hard work, his health suffered and he felt keenly thruout his life the

handicap of insecure health. None of his arguments is more eloquent and sustained than his emphasis on the importance of health; none of his achievements more significant than his introduction of health and hygiene into the schools in an endeavor to protect youth from the handicaps of his own life.

The early struggles and the family life which furnished the background for Mann's boyhood were ennobled by mutual regard and high ideals. In later years Mann spoke of the influence of his parents, saying that "all my boyish castles in the air had reference to doing something for the benefit of mankind. The early precepts of benevolence, inculcated upon me by my parents, flowed out in this direction; and I had a conviction that knowledge was my needed instrument. . . . If my parents had not the means to give me knowledge they intensified the love of it. They always spoke of learning and learned men with enthusiasm and a kind of reverence."

Another influence in Mann's life was the small library in his home town of Franklin. In pioneer days the citizens of this town decided to name it for Benjamin Franklin who had become one of the nation's leading citizens. In acknowledgment Franklin offered them a church bell, but afterwards saying that *sense* was preferable to *sound*, he changed the gift to a library—now famous as the first public library in America. Altho the hundred-odd books were mostly histories and theologies more suited to the town fathers than to children, Mann read them eagerly. Later as state

secretary he was able to secure school libraries with books better suited to children's interests. "Had I the power," he declared, "I would scatter libraries over the whole land as the sower sows his wheatfield."

Thus Mann had a double heritage—namesake of the great Latin poet and born in a town named for one of America's foremost citizens. Some years later Mann paid tribute to the latter, saying "Who does not feel honored by his relationship to Dr. Franklin, whether as a townsman, or as a countryman, or even as belonging to the same race? Who does not feel a sort of personal complacency in that frugality of his youth, which laid the foundation for so much competence and generosity in his mature age; in that wise discrimination of his outlays, which held the culture of the soul in absolute supremacy over the pleasures of sense; and in that consummate mastership of the great art of living, which carried his practical wisdom into every cottage in Christendom and made his name immortal?"

Opportunities for formal schooling were meager in Horace Mann's boyhood. "Until the age of fifteen," he says, "I had never been to school more than eight or ten weeks in a year." What a contrast to the opportunities of today when most young people receive more schooling in one year than the citizen of 1820 received in his entire lifetime. The schools of Horace Mann's boyhood had no comfortable seats, no blackboards, no maps or pictures. Teachers were poorly prepared. Discipline was severe and "lickin' and larnin'" were the

twin stars of knowledge. In 1844 the Boston Survey Committee found the floggings in a representative school to average 65 per day for 400 children.

When Horace was eighteen years old a classical teacher visited his town and encouraged him to go on with his studies. He prepared himself in six months from the time he began to study Latin grammar and entered Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island, from which he graduated in 1819 with first honors. His graduation oration, prophetic of his future thought, bore the title "The Gradual Advancement of the Human Species in Dignity and Happiness." Mann tutored for a brief period at Brown University, and then studied law at the school of Judge James Gould, Litchfield, Connecticut, famous as the first law school in America. A fellow student thus describes his first impression of Mann: "Mr. Mann's massive brow and high arching head did not then tell me what a great intellect was indicated; but the mild bright eye, and the pleasant expression of the eloquent mouth, told of geniality and mirthfulness. It was therefore easy to believe what was told me by the students, that he was the best fellow and the best wit in the office; but not before I formed his acquaintance was it so credible to me (what I was also told) that he was the best whist-player, the best scholar, and the best lawyer of the school."

While at Brown University, Mann lived for a time at the home of Dr. Asa Messer, president of the college. There he became fond of Charlotte Messer, daughter of the household, but it was not until 1830 when he had

attained some distinction as a lawyer and a citizen that they were married. There were two years of ideally happy life which ended with Mrs. Mann's unexpected death. She had always been frail and had been ill for some time but her passing came as a crushing shock to the sensitive nature of Horace Mann. Long after he paid this beautiful tribute to his wife: "During that period, when, for me, there was a light upon earth brighter than any light of the sun, and a voice sweeter than any of Nature's harmonies, I did not think but that the happiness which was boundless in present enjoyment would be perpetual in duration. . . . My life went out of myself. One after another, the feelings which had before been fastened upon other objects loosened their strong grasp, and went to dwell and rejoice in the sanctuary of her holy and beautiful nature."

Bereaved of the companionship of a beloved wife, Mann gave himself more and more completely to his humanitarian interests. In the practice of law as in his home life Mann set a high standard. Like Abraham Lincoln he made it a rule never to defend a cause which he did not consider just. In 1827 he was elected to the Massachusetts House of Representatives from Dedham and later from Boston where he removed in 1833 after the death of his first wife. His first speech in the House was in favor of religious liberty; his second in behalf of the railroads which were just beginning to develop. In 1835 he was elected to the State Senate and a year later became president of that body.

The great humanitarian reforms of the time had

Mann's chief support in the legislature. He was a life-long friend of Dr. Samuel G. Howe, educator of the blind; and of Dorothea Dix, pioneer in humane treatment of the insane. Almost singlehanded Mann secured a law establishing the State Lunatic Hospital at Worcester, the first in the United States. He also sponsored legislation against alcoholic beverages and traffic in lottery tickets.

But among all the social issues of the times, none appealed to him more strongly than the cause of public education. As a lawyer he was able to study the personal factors back of crime and broken lives. He saw that while laws increase and judges multiply to administer "justice," crime goes on as an invidious cancer in the very vitals of civilization. He saw the possibility of removing thru education some of the handicaps of character which brought people into the courts.

There were other public-spirited citizens who for more than a dozen years had been agitating for improvement in the educational system of the state. First among these stood James G. Carter, Harvard graduate and experienced teacher, whose brilliant "Outline of an Institution for the Education of Teachers," written in 1825, later earned for him the title of "Father of Normal Schools in Massachusetts." Finally in 1837, as chairman of the House Committee on Education and with Mann's support as president of the Senate, Carter secured enactment of a bill creating the first real state board of education in America. The law was signed by Governor Edward Everett on April 20. Realizing that an edu-

tional statesman was required to make effective the work of educational reform, the board on June 29 invited Horace Mann to become its secretary. In his private journal Mann wrote: "The path of usefulness is opened before me. . . . God grant me an annihilation of selfishness, a mind of wisdom, a heart of benevolence!"

On June 30 he communicated his acceptance declaring in his journal that "Henceforth, so long as I hold this office, I devote myself to the supremest welfare of mankind upon earth. I have faith in the improvability of the race—in their accelerating improvability." On July 1 he wrote, "This day I consider the first on which my official character as Secretary of the Board commences." The next day in a letter to a friend, he said: "I no longer write myself attorney, counsellor, or lawyer. My lawbooks are for sale. My office is 'to let.' The bar is no longer my forum. My jurisdiction is changed. I have abandoned jurisprudence and betaken myself to the larger sphere of mind and morals."

Few persons in Massachusetts saw as did Mann the opportunities of the new post. Indeed few of his friends approved his exchange of a lucrative law practice and a position of honor in the Senate to be a "post-rider from county to county looking after the welfare of children who will never know whence benefits may come and encountering the jealousy and prejudice and misrepresentation of ignorant parents."

But Mann answered: "If the title is not sufficiently honorable now, then it is clearly left for me to elevate it. I had rather be creditor than debtor to the title."

When he learned that the cautious legislature had fixed his salary at \$1,500 to include office and traveling expenses, he wrote: "Well, one thing is certain: if I live and have health, I will be revenged on them; I will do them more than \$1,500 worth of good."

Thus began the great career for which he had spent forty-one years in preparation.

### *Champion of a Great Cause*

To appreciate Horace Mann's signal achievement as first Secretary of the Massachusetts Board of Education, one must remember the condition of the schools at the time. The colonists, even in New England, had made only a fair start in establishing public schools when the Revolutionary War began and thru eight long years drained the resources of the people and diverted their energies from education. Even after the war was won, few people realized the full meaning of the terms "liberty" and "equality" in the new democracy. The Old World idea still persisted that "classes are essential—one to work, the other to improve; one portion of mankind is to be refined and cultivated, the other to suffer, toil, and live and die in vulgarity." Only a few great leaders realized the need of education for all if democratic government were to survive.

The struggle to establish and improve the schools is one of the major struggles of American history, to be compared in significance with the Revolutionary and Civil Wars. And yet in the schools we have devoted

much more attention to those wars than we have to the less dramatic but vastly greater enterprise of building up and operating the schools. The achievement of the American schools is the first great battle of the masses won without war—the first example in human history of what can be done on a large scale thru intelligence and cooperation to achieve opportunities for the masses which in former ages had required violent revolutions.

Each advance in the struggle for schools as we know them today—free, tax-supported, non-sectarian, state-supervised—had to be won against heavy odds of public inertia or active opposition from selfish interests. The historian Ellwood P. Cubberley outlines seven strategic points in the winning of the war against “ignorance and bad teaching:”

- (1) The battle for tax support.
- (2) The battle to eliminate the pauper-school idea.
- (3) The battle to make the schools entirely free.
- (4) The battle to establish state supervision.
- (5) The battle to eliminate sectarianism.
- (6) The battle to extend the system upward.
- (7) Addition of the state university to crown the system.

Behind each of these great achievements is a pioneer who had the vision to see new possibilities, the courage to work on them, the patience to visualize them clearly, the skill to win the cooperation of others, and the sustained energy to follow them to completion. Each state had its early leaders who shared in the great educational revival of the middle nineteenth century of which Horace Mann was the chief figure—James G. Carter in

Massachusetts, Henry Barnard in Connecticut, Calvin H. Wiley and Joseph Caldwell of North Carolina, Caleb Mills of Indiana, Gideon Hawley of New York, Samuel Lewis and Samuel Galloway of Ohio, Robert J. Breckinridge of Kentucky, and John Swett of California.

The problem which Mann faced in Massachusetts was fairly typical: how to unify the scattered district or township schools into a single state system of education with the proper balance between state and local control. Horace Mann thus describes the evils of the district system under which the schools of Massachusetts had declined: "These schools at the present time are so many independent communities, each being governed by its own habits, traditions, and local customs. There is no common superintending power over them; there is no bond of brotherhood or family between them. They are strangers and aliens to each other."

Except for laws relating to such general matters as the length of term and the distribution of funds, the state governments had taken little interest in the public schools before the days of Horace Mann. Those who had been opposed to tax-supported schools in the first place naturally continued to oppose any steps looking toward increasing their effectiveness. The towns resented state interference in their local affairs. They remembered the attempted despotisms of George the Third and they pointed to the spectacle of the Prussian and French monarchies of the time. In certain states such as New York where efforts had been made to have an officer in the state government responsible for the pro-

motion of education, the forces of reaction had set in and the office had been abolished after a few years.

With the establishment of the Massachusetts Board of Education and the election of Horace Mann to its secretaryship, a new epoch began. Here was a leadership not to be broken or thwarted, a leadership that was much more than a name or a mere routine. Here was clear recognition of the state's responsibility for education as a state. Here was a man determined, using the democratic processes of enlightenment and persuasion, to bring to the people the elements of education which would enable them to lead good lives and to maintain the personal rights, the political liberties, and the representative institutions for which the Revolution had been fought.

The Massachusetts Board of Education was carefully set up to preserve the traditions of local self-government. It had no powers to command, only to persuade. Its duties set down in the law were "to collect information of the actual condition and efficiency of the common schools and other means of popular education, and to diffuse as widely as possible, throughout every part of the Commonwealth, information of the most approved and successful methods of arranging the studies, and conducting the education of the young. . . ."

But Mann saw much beyond the words of the law. To him the Board of Education was "like a spring, almost imperceptible, flowing from the highest table-land, between oceans, which is destined to deepen and widen as it descends, diffusing fertility and beauty in its course; and nations shall dwell upon its banks. It

is the first great movement towards an organized system of common education, which shall at once be thorough and universal. Every civilized State is as imperfectly organized, without a minister or secretary of instruction, as it would be without ministers or secretaries of State, Finance, War, or the Navy."

For twelve years (1837-1848) as Secretary of the Massachusetts Board of Education, Mann took the case for free schools to a people who were indifferent or hostile to the need for them. Altho opposed by "sordid politicians, unprogressive schoolmen, and sectarian-preachers," and hampered by one of the most severe financial depressions ever known in the country, Mann guided the state to a great educational revival. He sensed that periods of crisis are often times of great mental and spiritual awakening. So successfully did he win the case for free schools that this period is now recalled as the foundation period of the public-school movement in America.

A few passages from Mann's personal diary during the period of his secretaryship, are eloquent testimony of the difficulties he faced in his efforts to arouse faith in education among the people—a pioneering as exacting, as discouraging, as wearying as that of the frontiersman.

*August 19*—To make an impression in Berkshire in regard to the schools is like attempting to batter down Gibraltar with one's fist. . . .

*October 1*—Today we have had what must be called the convention in Dedham—a meager, spiritless, discouraging affair. . . . Surely if the schoolmaster is abroad in this country I should be glad to meet him.

*January 26*—This week, on Wednesday, Governor Morton gave his inaugural address. He cut the Board of Education entirely. Probably he did not know of its existence. He has got to know it.

*February 2*—Some partisan men are making efforts to demolish the Board of Education. . . . It is my fortune to stand as the pioneer of this movement; and, like other pioneers, I cannot expect to escape unscathed. But it is a cause worth being sacrificed for.

Mann was convinced that "in a Republic ignorance is a crime." So clearly did he visualize the school system which would develop educated citizens that for more than a century the states have moved more or less steadily in the direction he indicated. He knew that sanitary and comfortable buildings were necessary to the health of the children. Teachers who had been given special preparation for their work were essential in the improvement of the curriculum. Statewide supervision was the first step in the provision of equal opportunities for all children. Finally the people themselves must be won to the support of the whole enterprise.

Step by step he worked to carry out his plan. He withdrew from all other professional or business interests to devote himself entirely to the great cause which he had chosen to champion. He studied educational conditions, collected statistics, held conferences, gave public addresses to lay and educational groups. His influence aided in the founding of the first public normal school in America at Lexington in 1839. He edited the *Common School Journal* and wrote annual reports

which stated educational needs with such force that they were read thruout the civilized world and are still full of inspiration for educational workers.

As jurist, orator, and legislator, Mann brought the layman's experience in public affairs to the cause of education. He knew his people and his times. He knew that the people could be counted upon if they understood what was at stake. His whole plan of action was based on a fundamental principle: "The education of the whole people in a republican government can never be attained without the consent of the whole people. Compulsion, even though it were a desirable, is not an available instrument. Enlightenment, not coercion, is our resource."

"In our country and our times," he wrote, "no man is worthy the honored name of a statesman who does not include the highest practicable education of the people in all his plans of administration. He may have eloquence; he may have a knowledge of all history, diplomacy, jurisprudence; and by these he might claim in other countries, the elevated rank of a statesman; but unless he speaks, plans, labors, at all times and in all places, for the culture and edification of the whole people, he is not, he cannot be, an American statesman."

The Massachusetts legislature was often unfavorable to Mann's efforts, slow to vote adequate appropriations, suspicious of state interference in local education, slow to support legislation for school improvement. Mann worked unceasingly at the problem of winning an adverse political authority to his cause. In 1842 before the

opening of the legislature, he writes to the principal of one of the newly-established normal schools: "I see a Democrat is to come from Lexington. Do you know him? Can you magnetize him? If so, infuse a fullness of the right spirit, though you faint in the operation. You know Mr. F— of Nantucket. He worked well for us last winter. Cannot you secure him for the present? Mr. R— of West Cambridge, also, was in favor of us last year. See him, if you can. If not, see his friends. Become all things to all men. Go, preach, and wherever you preach, speak with a flaming tongue, miraculously convert. Let us carry the cause through one year more, and I think the young giant will be able to take care of himself."

In conferences with businessmen, Mann stressed the economic value of education. "Today," he writes in 1841, "I have been to Lowell and have had a pleasant interview with the superintendents of some of the largest establishments in that city, on the subject of the superiority of educated as contrasted with uneducated people, in the amount and value of their products of labor. My object is to show that education has a market value; that it is so far an article of merchandise that it may be turned to a pecuniary account. . . ."

He collects the testimony of businessmen, of manufacturers, of the great mill-owners of Boston and Lowell. He asks them to follow the careers of the educated and ignorant workmen. The replies of these manufacturers, each of whom employed thousands of workmen, proved the superiority of educated workmen and justified the

conclusion that education not only advances happiness and wellbeing, but yields "returns of silver and gold."

In five years the results of his work began to show themselves. He writes in February 1842: "Tomorrow there is to be a grand celebration at Salem on account of the improvement and extension of their school system. A great change has been effected in that city—a new body and a new soul; new schoolhouses, and a new spirit among the teachers; and tomorrow is to be a *fête*-day. In the evening I am to lecture; and on Wednesday evening I am to endeavor, by a lecture in Brookline, to carry out a plan for the establishment of a high school there."

And in March of the same year he records that the legislature is beginning to reward his efforts: "The brightest days which have ever shone on our cause were yesterday and today. Yesterday, resolves passed the House for granting \$6000 per year for three years to the Normal Schools; and fifteen dollars to each district for a school library on condition of its raising fifteen dollars for the same purpose."

By 1843 Mann's untiring efforts for the cause to which he devoted "an average of fifteen hours a day," combined with the handicaps of poor health from which he suffered thruout life, brought him to the verge of a physical collapse. A change seemed absolutely necessary and on the first of May he sailed for Europe to visit schools, especially in Germany. He took with him his bride and second wife, Mrs. Mary Peabody Mann who had long been an admirer and who shared in the enthusiasm for

his great work. Mary Mann came of a distinguished family: her sister Sophia was the wife of Nathaniel Hawthorne; her sister Elizabeth taught in Bronson Alcott's school in Boston and helped introduce the Froebel kindergarten movement into the United States. Mrs. Mary Mann shared to a remarkable degree the aspirations and ideals of her husband. Her biography is the most inspiring account we have of Mann's life. They rejoiced in three sons: Horace; George Combe, named after Mann's friend, the English educator and phrenologist; and Benjamin Franklin, named for the benefactor of Mann's home town.

The results of Mann's tour in Europe were given to the public in his Seventh Annual Report to the Board of Education in 1844. The Seventh Report shook the very granite boulders upon which the state of Massachusetts rests and reverberated thruout the entire country. In the Report Mann describes the methods and organization of the best European schools. Massachusetts schools suffered by comparison. It was then that thirty-one Boston schoolmasters, stung by such expressions in the Report as "ignorance of teachers" and "sleepy supervision," began the most famous pedagogical squabble of modern times. The "Remarks" of the Boston schoolmasters on the Seventh Report filled a document of 144 pages in which Mann's proposals for the improvement of teaching were flayed without mercy.

Stung by what he considered abuse from his colleagues, Mann issued a "Reply" to the "Remarks" of the schoolmasters. And this reply suggested that the

traditional teaching methods of the Puritan fathers were just as rude and rocky as the shores upon which they had stopped.

In the midst of this controversy, Mann wrote to his physician: "Can you do anything for a brain that has not slept for three weeks?" His friends saw that not only Mann's health but the cause so dear to him were imperiled. They rallied to his defense. As an expression of public confidence, they raised among themselves \$5000 and asked the Legislature for a like sum, which was granted and placed in the hands of the Board of Education for the improvement of the schools.

In the meantime Mann made good use of the crisis. He fixed public attention on a great issue and forced his opponents to defend their stand. The people saw that the schoolmasters were trying to stand in the path of progress. The unexpected public debate dramatized the need for school reform and set education in Massachusetts forward fifty years.

All twelve of Mann's Annual Reports to the Board of Education, while they did not precipitate such controversy as the Seventh, were widely read and quoted both in the United States and abroad.

*The first report* covers Mann's work from the time he took up his duties on July 1 thru 1837. It is dated January 1, 1838, and was published as a Senate document in February. In the following paragraphs the dates given are the years covered by the reports rather than the dates of their publication. The first report contains an excellent statement of the duties of school committees,

especially in the selection of teachers. It deplores the apathy of the people regarding the condition of the public schools.

A supplementary report on schoolhouses discussed heating and ventilation, the proper kind of desks, the location of rooms and playgrounds.

*In the second report*, for 1838, Mann advocates the teaching of reading by the word-method rather than by single letters. He also criticises the character of school reading books.

*In the third report*, 1839, Mann discusses the responsibility of the people for the improvement of schools; the dangers of child labor which was very prevalent at the time; the formation of good reading habits and the need for the establishment of district school libraries.

The district school system, "entrenched behind statutory rights and immemorial usage" was the subject of the *fourth report*, 1840. Mann declared that "no substantial and general progress could be made as long as the district system existed," and that union schools should be established for the sake of grading and classifying the pupils.

*The fifth report*, 1841, has worldwide fame for its eloquent presentation of the advantages of education: its effect upon individual and community wellbeing and its contribution to industry and science. "This report," said William T. Harris, United States Commissioner of Education from 1889 to 1906, "deserves to be placed in the hands of the people of every generation."

*The sixth report*, 1842, stresses the need for a practical

course of study which will prepare students for daily living. "Can any satisfactory ground be assigned," asks Mann, "why algebra, a branch which not one man in a thousand ever has occasion to use in the business of life, should be studied by more than 2300 pupils, and book-keeping, which every man, even the day laborer, should understand, should be attended to by only a little more than half that number?" This report also contains one of the earliest American discussions of the educational value of the study of physiology and hygiene in the schools.

*The seventh report* for 1843, which brought about the controversy with the Boston schoolmasters, points out to us the origin and source of some of the most familiar features of our best presentday schools—the word-method of teaching reading, oral instruction, elementary science, language exercises, geography built upon the life around, music and drawing. One writer says, "We are so familiar with these things now that we may wonder at Mr. Mann's enthusiasm over them; but we must remember that a half century has wrought great changes in American schools, changes that in some measure have grown out of the very document we are reading."

*In his eighth report*, 1844, Mann discusses the method of conducting teachers' institutes, the value of teachers' associations, and the study of vocal music in the schools. It will be recalled that it was thru the aid given Lowell Mason by Mann that singing was made a feature of public-school work.

*The ninth report*, 1845, lays down the principle of

"equality of school privileges for all the children of the town, whether they belong to a poor district or a rich one, a large district or a small one." Mann also discusses the motives to which the teacher should appeal and shows how obedience can be secured thru affection and respect, but not thru fear. That the idea of an offence is often suggested by its own prohibition, Mann illustrates by the story of a priest and a hostler. At confessional one day, the priest asked the hostler if he had ever greased the teeth of his customers' horses to prevent them from eating their oats. The man replied that he had never heard of such a thing, but the next time he came to confess, the first offence he had to mention was that of greasing the teeth of his customers' horses.

The history of the common school in Massachusetts and its relation to the future progress of the state is the subject of the *tenth report* for 1846. Mann states three propositions which must underlie a strong and permanent system of common schools:

(1) The successive generations of men taken collectively constitute one great commonwealth.

(2) The property of this commonwealth is pledged for the education of all its youth up to such a point as will save them from poverty and vice, and prepare them for the adequate performance of their social and civic duties.

(3) The successive holders of this property are trustees bound to the faithful execution of their trust by the most sacred obligations, and embezzlement and pillage from children and descendants have not less of criminality, and have more of meanness than

the same offences when perpetrated against contemporaries.

*The eleventh report*, 1847, discusses the relation of education and crime, and concludes that, "In universal education, every follower of God and friend of humankind will find the only sure means of carrying forward the particular reform to which he is devoted. In whatever department of philanthropy he may be engaged he will find that department to be only a segment of the great circle of beneficence of which universal education is center and circumference."

*The twelfth and last report* in 1848—prepared after Mann had resigned the secretaryship—reviews the changes in education in Massachusetts during the past twelve years and sets forth again the necessity of the schools to educate young people for life in a democracy.

### *The After Years*

In 1848 with the sudden death in Congress of John Quincy Adams, who had been an earnest champion of the anti-slavery cause, Horace Mann was persuaded to resign from the secretaryship and represent Massachusetts in Congress. This he agreed to do saying that he was called "to assist in securing the freedom of man," since "before a man can be educated he must be a free man."

Altho a bitter opponent of slavery all his life, Mann did not wish to jeopardize school support by taking sides on this highly controversial issue during his secretaryship. When he learned that Samuel J. May, principal

of a Massachusetts normal school, planned to deliver a lecture on abolition in Boston, Mann wrote: "I have further plans for obtaining more aid (for the schools) but the moment it is known or supposed that the cause is to be perverted to or connected with any of the exciting party questions of the day, I shall never get another cent."

In Congress he was free to speak out. He became nationally prominent in his opposition to the extension of slavery. His speech in opposition to the Fugitive Slave Act was characterized by Henry Wilson, afterwards vicepresident of the United States, as "one of the most brilliant speeches for liberty that ever fell from human lips in our own or any other country."

Mann's famous colleague from Massachusetts was Daniel Webster with whom he engaged in bitter debates over the slavery issue. After Webster's speech of March 7, 1850 which Massachusetts regarded as a bid for slave votes but which Webster had probably given in the hope of preventing the impending rupture between North and South, Mann wrote to a friend, "He is a fallen star! Lucifer descended from heaven!"

Mann's attitude regarding the slave question is embodied in his answer to a question put to him in the midst of a speech: "Would you advance the slaves to an equal social and political condition with the white race?" Mann's impromptu answer was: "I would give to *every human being* the best opportunities I could to develop and cultivate the faculties which God has bestowed upon him, and which therefore, he holds under

a divine charter. . . . Having done this, I would leave him, as I would every other man, to find his level—to occupy the position to which he should be entitled by his intelligence and virtue."

During the last year of his stay in Congress, Mann assisted Dorothea Dix, the great pioneer in humane treatment of the mentally diseased, who was working for passage of a bill to establish hospitals for the insane.

On September 15, 1852, Mann was nominated for Governor of Massachusetts by the Free-Soil party. On the same day he was chosen president of the newly-established Antioch College at Yellow Springs, Ohio. He accepted the latter office. At this time he was fifty-six years old, described by a Washington commentator as the "tall, straight, thin gentleman with the clean face, white hair, gold-rimmed spectacles, black clothes, and firm, quick motions."

To Horace Mann the Antioch College experiment opened a new field of pioneering in the great West. To him a youthful community or state was like a child. "Its bones are yet in the gristle, and can be shaped into symmetry and form and nobleness of stature. Its heart overflows with generosity and hope, and its habits of thought have not yet been hardened into insoluble dogmatism. This youthful Western world is a gigantic youth, and therefore its education must be such as befits a giant. It is born to such power as no heir to an earthly throne ever inherited, and it must be trained to make that power a blessing and not a curse to mankind."

At Antioch, Mann had need of all his courage and

resourcefulness. When he arrived at the then-incompleted college, no house had been provided for him and he took refuge in a deserted boardinghouse. The stumps of the trees from newly-cleared land still remained standing at the very threshold of the college. Mrs. Mann described the whole twenty acres as "one vast quagmire of clayey soil in which plank walks sank below the surface and in rainy weather floated upon it." The college buildings were incompletely built and it was many weeks after the opening of the college on October 5 before stoves arrived to heat either the main building or the student dormitories. Mann tried to describe the unfinished aspect of the college by saying that, "supposing creation had lately issued out of chaos, it might be about as late in the week as Wednesday."

Cultural and social standards of the middlewestern college were equally unpolished. Mrs. Mann writes that "it was even difficult to introduce the refinement of table-napkins," and that "it was necessary to make a by-law to oblige the students to sit at table half an hour, such were their rough and uncultured habits."

Still worse, Mann discovered that the promised financial backing for the institution was largely mythical. From the beginning he was beset with financial difficulties and much of his energy, which he had planned to devote to educational reform, had to be divided with the more urgent problem of how to keep the college alive. His salary originally set at \$3,000 and reduced successively to \$2,000 and \$1,500 was never paid in full.

Yet he was able to impress upon Antioch a remarkable

intellectual and spiritual vitality. He insisted upon complete educational equality for the sexes and for all races; he emphasized the importance of student health; introduced the elective system of study, and steadily opposed any kind of competition as a spur to study. In religion, he was liberal; in morals and conduct strict. One of his students says that "the elements he strove to introduce in the college life were thoroness, order, purity, and self-reliance. He endeavored to impress each student with the idea that the state of society in which he lived, should and would be influenced by his own personality and that to shirk this responsibility was to commit a crime." To Mann a college was not only a home of scholarship, but was also a place for training all the latent qualities—physical, intellectual, spiritual—of the individual. This broad concept lies at the basis of the Antioch plan of today whereby the student obtains a synthesis of theory and practice by carrying on part-time work in local industries while at the same time continuing his college studies.

In the sultry summer of 1859 Mann died at Antioch College, worn out by six years of over-work and strain. One of his friends who was present describes the scene as follows:

"President Mann was gently told of the near approach of death. . . . 'Ask the doctor how long,' he said. 'Three hours at most,' he was told. 'I have then something to do,' he answered. He was told that any agitation would shorten his life. He indicated his indifference and requested that his students lingering in the village should

be called. A group gathered by the low couch near the window, open to the summer. Half rising at moments from his pillows, he took each one in succession by the hand and familiarly calling the names of his student friends, in a tone ringing, musical and clear as in his most vital efforts from the college platform, he addressed to them, according to the needs and personality of each, a series of discourses as exalted and glowing as ever were utterances from human lips. . . The American teacher spoke no word of himself, but employed his latest thoughts and breath with the welfare and encouragement of the living."

Horace Mann was buried on the campus of Antioch College. On his tomb were inscribed the last words of his last address to the graduating class of 1859:

I BESEECH YOU TO TREASURE UP IN YOUR HEARTS THESE MY PARTING WORDS: BE ASHAMED TO DIE UNTIL YOU HAVE WON SOME VICTORY FOR HUMANITY.

A year or two later his body was removed to Providence, Rhode Island, and buried in the North Burial Grounds beside his first wife, Charlotte Messer Mann.

#### *Estimates of Horace Mann's Life*

The very fact of the Horace Mann Centennial emphasizes the importance of the life of Horace Mann even as the George Washington Bicentennial emphasized the importance of Washington. It is interesting in this con-

nection to review some of the estimates which have been placed upon the work of Horace Mann.

A century has passed since Horace Mann, having given up a career in the profession of law and having resigned the presidency of the Massachusetts State Senate, became Secretary of the newly-organized Massachusetts Board of Education. As one approaches the State House today he sees the statue of Horace Mann beside that of Daniel Webster. The statue was erected by small sums from school children and friends of public education. It is natural that Massachusetts should feel great affection for Horace Mann. He often spoke of the pupils of the state as "my children". Theodore Parker at the time of Mann's death said that "Horace Mann took the common schools of Massachusetts in his arms and blessed them," and Charles Sumner declared that his portrait should be in every public school in the state.

"Under the leadership of Horace Mann," writes the New York State Commissioner of Education, Frank P. Graves, "a practically unorganized set of schools with diverse aims and methods was welded into a well-ordered system with high ideals . . . and the people of Massachusetts renewed their faith in the common schools."

When the complete story of Mann's struggles is written, Colonel Parker declared, it will reveal "a profound depth of heroism rarely equaled in the history of the world." Another historian writes of him: "Mann went from one end of the state to the other, into large towns and obscure villages, seeking to call together the people and waken in them an interest in their schools. He ap-

pealed to them with the power of his high-strained, impassioned eloquence. Sometimes after sweeping a room and building a fire in severe winter weather he could get but a handful of people to listen to him. For years he suffered in health and was threatened with consumption; yet fifteen hours a day was the usual measure of the Secretary's work. But nothing daunted him. How he endured the labor nobody can tell. There seems to be the power of vitality in a lofty purpose."

Mann began his work in the midst of the great financial panic of 1837. From an economic point of view no period could have been less favorable for an expansion in public expenditures, yet what he accomplished is shown in the following statement by George H. Martin in his *Evolution of the Massachusetts Public School System*: "Statistics show that the appropriations for public schools had doubled; that more than two million dollars had been spent in providing better schoolhouses; that the wages of men as teachers had increased 62 percent, of women 51 percent; one month had been added to the average length of the schools; the ratio of private school expenditures to those of the public schools had diminished from 75 percent to 36 percent; the compensation of school committees had been made compulsory, and their supervision was more general and constant; three normal schools had been established and had sent out several hundred teachers who were making themselves felt in all parts of the state."

The scope of Mann's heroic service is visualized by Charles and Mary Beard in *The Rise of American*

sentials by modern educators: that the first condition of education is health; that school reform is always school-master reform; that training rather than instruction is the true method; that the development of mind and character by a wholesome moral training and what is to-day called mental hygiene is the aim of true education; that instead of competition the spirit of cooperation and democratic ideals should be developed by the public schools; that a method which makes good schools but bad pupils is folly."

"It is evident that Horace Mann was scientifically minded on educational matters long before his time," writes another biographer. "It is only the man of exceptional ability who has the power to set aside the instinctive aversion to change which all adults have and to consider a novel action on its merits. Horace Mann had that power. . . . Perhaps there is no better tribute to his farseeing genius than that the new era foreseen by him did not begin to materialize until two generations later."

It was largely because of his progressive spirit and ideals that Horace Mann became America's best-known educator abroad. His works were translated into many foreign languages. At least six books dealing with his life have been published abroad, three in France, two in Spanish countries, and one in Italy. His *Seventh Annual Report* in which he records his impressions during a trip abroad in 1843 of European schools, especially in Germany and Prussia, was widely translated and quoted. Robert Ulich, Harvard Professor of Education, points out that Mann did much in establishing the relations

between German and American educators. "And it is enlightening to see how the progressive educators on each side of the Atlantic described, sometimes perhaps exaggerating and simplifying a little, the advantages of the other country, endeavoring to stimulate their compatriots to greater activity."

In the London city council in 1842 after a vote had been taken in favor of sectarian education, a member asked permission to read from the Reports of Horace Mann. The reading made so great an impression that the vote was reversed. The British Parliament reprinted by special vote a large part of the Seventh Report. Of the Tenth Report the Edinburgh Review (England) said: "This volume is indeed a noble monument of a civilized people; and if America were sunk beneath the waves, would remain the fairest picture on record of an ideal commonwealth."

Sarmiento, the "schoolmaster statesman" of South America, on a visit to the United States in 1847, became well acquainted with Horace Mann whom he called a noble promoter of education. Sarmiento's report on the educational system of the United States emphasizes the work and ideals of Horace Mann. "If I could give any advice to the South American government," he said, "it would be that they procure the greatest possible number of copies of the writings of Horace Mann and scatter them freely in every city and village."

So, too, in France where Felix Pécaut, the French Horace Mann, wrote that he "should like to see the biography of Horace Mann in the hands of every public

man . . . in him the citizen, the prophet, the school-master are united."

A few days after Mann's death on August 2, 1859, the convention of the National Education Association paid tribute to him in these words: "The cause of education generally, and the world at large, have lost a friend whose distinguished efforts in the cause of human improvement entitle him to the lasting remembrance of every lover of his race. . . ."

The centennial of Mann's birth in 1896 was widely celebrated thru memorial exercises and the publication of essays and articles. He was elected to the Hall of Fame at New York University in 1900 and on the tablet is inscribed his immortal statement: "The Common School is the greatest discovery ever made by man. It is supereminent in its universality and in the timeliness of the aid it proffers. . . . The Common School can train up children in the elements of all good knowledge and of virtue."

One of Mann's biographers, Gabriel Compayré of France, wrote in 1901 that "Mann's countrymen have not forgotten what they owe to him. They have raised statues to him and in 1896 they celebrated the anniversary of his birth; but what is better still is that they remain faithful to his inspiration, and he may be said to be still present in their midst."

Today Mann's statue is found in many of our educational institutions and his name adorns many schools thruout the land. There is no classroom where the work is not more effective because he lived.

PART II

**THE LECTURE ON EDUCATION**

By

**HORACE MANN**



## PART II

### THE LECTURE ON EDUCATION

#### *A Folk Lecture*

To select from Horace Mann's writings a major address to include in such a volume as this is not easy. We have chosen the Lecture on Education for two reasons: First, because it was addressed directly to the people in face-to-face contact again and again so that the speaker came to express the aspiration of the people in terms that brought the best response. Second, because of the emphasis which this address places on the very things which at this time most need attention. We have included the Introduction to the lecture written by Horace Mann himself when the lecture was published in book form in 1840.

#### HORACE MANN'S INTRODUCTION

THE Act, creating the Massachusetts Board of Education, was passed, April 20, 1837. In June following, the Board was organized, and its Secretary chosen. The duties of the Secretary, as expressed in the Act, are, to

"collect information of the actual condition and efficiency of the Common Schools, and other means of Popular Education; and to diffuse, as widely as possible, throughout every part of the Commonwealth, information of the most approved and successful methods of arranging the studies, and conducting the education of the young,—to the end, that all children in this Commonwealth, who depend upon Common Schools for instruction, may have the best education which those schools can be made to impart."

The Board, immediately after its organization, issued an "Address to the Public," inviting the friends of education to assemble in Convention, in their respective counties, in the ensuing autumn; and the Secretary was requested to be present at those conventions, both to obtain information in regard to the condition of the schools, and to explain to the public what were supposed to be the leading motives and objects of the Legislature, in establishing the Board.

The Author of the following Lecture, having been a member of the Legislature, when the Board was established, and conversant with the general views of its projectors and advocates, (although, at that time, without the slightest idea of ever being its Secretary,) endeavored, in preparing the Lecture, to sketch a rapid outline of deficiencies to be supplied, and of objects to be pursued, in relation to our Common-School system. The Lecture was delivered before the County Convention, held throughout the State, in the autumn of 1837; also before the members of the Legislature, in 1838, and before

other large and intelligent assemblies; and, on all or most of these occasions, a copy was requested for the press. A period of about three years having now elapsed, and,—as far as the Author or his friends have been able to ascertain,—a general coincidence of public opinion having been expressed, both as to the summary of defects to be remedied and of ends to be aimed at, the Author now deems it proper to give the Lecture a more permanent form. He is led to take this course, lest the general exposition of the views it contains,—views, which are supposed to be in harmony with those of the Legislature that established the Board, and of the original members of the Board itself,—should be hereafter misreported by inadvertence, or misrepresented by design; and also, lest the Board should be charged, in any of its plans, with a departure from its original purposes.

As a literary production, the Lecture may need some apology, on account of the almost colloquial character of its style, and its exuberance of illustration. It was foreseen,—as it actually happened,—that most of the audiences, before whom it was to be delivered, would be of a most miscellaneous character, in respect to mental cultivation and attainments. Some persons of high education, who know and feel its value, desire the same boon for all; other persons, who are illiterate, and who therefore feel the want of an education, desire to rescue their children and their friends from suffering under the same privation. Hence, auditors, widely differing in understanding, would be likely to assemble on the same occasion; and, as far as possible, something should

be addressed to the train of thought and power of comprehension, belonging to each class. A common, but very expressive phrase is current amongst us, in regard to speakers who fall into the mistake of excessive profundity, or of excessive learning, in addressing a popular audience. They are said, to *shoot over the heads of their hearers*. But, where an audience contains every grade of literary character, it may be compared to a company of men scattered up and down an extensive hillside; and, if the speaker does not direct his remarks above the heads of the lowest, they will be sure to fall below the feet of the highest. This fact indicates, that he should generally aim where the collection may be supposed to be most dense,—that is, about midway between the summit and the base,—but throw an occasional shot, both above and below.

January, 1840.

THE LECTURE ON EDUCATION

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IN pursuance of notice, contained in a circular letter, lately addressed to the school committees and friends of Education, in this county, I now appear before you, as the Secretary of the Massachusetts Board of Education. That Board was constituted by an Act of the Legislature, passed, April 20, 1837. It consists of the Governor and Lieutenant Governor of the Commonwealth, for the time being,—who are members *ex officiis*,—and of eight other gentlemen, appointed by the Executive, with the advice

and consent of the Council. The object of the Board is, by extensive correspondence, by personal interviews, by the development and discussion of principles, to collect such information, on the great subject of education, as now lies scattered, buried and dormant; and after digesting, and, as far as possible, systematizing and perfecting it, to send it forth again to the extremest borders of the State, so that all improvements which are local, may be enlarged into universal; so that what is now transitory and evanescent, may be established in permanency; and that correct views, on this all-important subject, may be multiplied by the number of minds capable of understanding them.

To accomplish the object of their creation, however, the Board are clothed with no power, either restraining or directory. If they know of better modes of education, they have no authority to enforce their adoption. Nor have they any funds at their disposal. Even the services of the members are gratuitously rendered. Without authority, then, to command, and without money to remunerate or reward, their only resource, the only sinews of their strength, are, their power of appealing to an enlightened community, to rally for the promotion of its dearest interests.

Except, therefore, the friends of Education, in different parts of the State, shall proffer their cordial and strenuous cooperation, it is obvious, that the great purposes, for which the Board was constituted can never be accomplished. Some persons, indeed, have suggested, that the Secretary of the Board should visit the schools, indi-

vidually, and impart such counsel and encouragement as he might be able;—not reflecting that such is their number and the shortness of the time during which they are kept, that, if he were to allow himself but one day for each school, to make specific examinations and to give detailed instructions, it would occupy something more than sixteen years to complete the circuit;—while the period, between the ages of four and sixteen, during which our children usually attend school, is but twelve years; so that, before the Secretary could come round upon his track again, one entire generation of scholars would have passed away, and one third of another. At his quickest speed, he would lose sight of one quarter of all the children in the State. The Board, therefore, have no voice, they have no organ, by which they can make themselves heard, in the distant villages and hamlets of this land, where those juvenile habits are now forming, where those processes of thought and feeling are, now, today, maturing, which, some twenty or thirty years hence, will find an arm, and become resistless might, and will uphold, or rend asunder, our social fabric. The Board may,—I trust they will,—be able to collect light and to radiate it; but upon the people, *upon the people*, will still rest the great and inspiring duty of prescribing to the next generation what their fortunes shall be, by determining in what manner they shall be educated. For it is the ancestors of a people, who prepare and predetermine all the great events in that people's history; their posterity only collect, and read them. No just judge will ever decide upon the moral responsibility of

an individual, without first ascertaining what kind of parents he had;—nor will any just historian ever decide upon the honor or the infamy of a people, without placing the character of its ancestors in the judgment-balance. If the system of national instruction, devised and commenced by Charlemagne, had been continued, it would have changed the history of the French people. Such an event as the French Revolution never would have happened with free schools; any more than the American Revolution would have happened without them. The mobs, the riots, the burnings, the lynchings, perpetrated by the *men* of the present day, are perpetrated, because of their vicious or defective education, when children. We see, and feel, the havoc and the ravage of their tiger-passions, now, when they are full grown; but it was years ago, that they were whelped and suckled. And so, too, if we are derelict from our duty, in this matter, our children, in their turn, will suffer. If we permit the vulture's eggs to be incubated and hatched, it will then be too late to take care of the lambs.

### *Education: The Debt Eternal*

Some eulogize our system of Popular Education, as though worthy to be universally admired and imitated. Others pronounce it, circumscribed in its action, and feeble, even where it acts. Let us waste no time in composing this strife. If good, let us improve it; if bad, let us reform it. It is of human institutions, as of men,—not any one is so good that it cannot be made

better; nor so bad, that it may not become worse. Our system of education is not to be compared with those of other states or countries, merely to determine, whether it may be a little more or a little less perfect than they; but it is to be contrasted with our highest ideas of perfection itself, and then the pain of the contrast to be assuaged, by improving it, forthwith and continually. The love of excellence looks ever upward towards a higher standard; it is unimproving pride and arrogance only, that are satisfied with being superior to a lower. No community should rest contented, with being superior to other communities, while it is inferior to its own capabilities. And such are the beneficent ordinations of Providence, that the very thought of improving is the germination of improvement.

The science and the art of Education, like every thing human, depend upon culture, for advancement. And they would be more cultivated, if the rewards for attention, and the penalties for neglect, were better understood. When effects follow causes,—quick as thunder, lightning,—even infants and idiots learn to beware; or they act, to enjoy. They have a glimmer of reason, sufficient, in such cases, for admonition, or impulse. Now, in this world, the entire succession of events, which fills time and makes up life, is nothing but causes and effects. These causes and effects are bound and linked together by an adamantine law. And the Deity has given us power over the effects, by giving us power over the causes. This power consists in a knowledge of the connection established between causes and effects,

—enabling us to foresee the future consequences of present conduct. If you show to me a handful of perfect seeds, I know, that, with appropriate culture, those seeds will produce a growth after their kind; whether it be of pulse, which is ripened for human use in a month, or of oaks, whose lifetime is centuries. So, in some of the actions of men, consequences follow conduct with a lock-step; in others, the effects of youthful actions first burst forth as from a subterranean current, in advanced life. In those great relations which subsist between different generations,—between ancestors and posterity,—effects are usually separated from their causes, by long intervals of time. The pulsations of a nation's heart are to be counted, not by seconds, but by years. Now, it is in this class of cases, where there are long intervals lying between our conduct and its consequences; where one generation sows, and another generation reaps;—it is in this class of cases, that the greatest and most sorrowful of human errors originate. Yet, even for these, a benevolent Creator has supplied us with an antidote. He has given us the faculty of reason, whose especial office and function it is, to discover the connection between causes and effects; and thereby to enable us so to regulate the causes of today, as to predestinate the effects of tomorrow. In the eye of reason, causes and effects exist in proximity,—in juxtaposition. They lie side by side, whatever length of time, or distance of space, comes in between them. If I am guilty of an act or a neglect, today, which will certainly cause the infliction of a wrong, it matters not whether that wrong happen, on

the other side of the globe, or in the next century. Whenever or wherever it happens, it is mine; it belongs to me; my conscience owns it; and no sophistry can give me absolution. Who would think of acquitting an incendiary, because the train which he had laid and lighted, first circuited the globe before it reached and consumed his neighbor's dwelling? From the nature of the case, in education, the effects are widely separated from the causes. They happen so long afterwards, that the reason of the community loses sight of the connection between them. It does not bring the cause and the effect together, and lay them, and look at them, side by side.

If, instead of twenty-one *years*, the course of Nature allowed but twenty-one *days*, to rear an infant to the full stature of manhood, and to sow in his bosom, the seeds of unbounded happiness or of unspeakable misery,—I suppose, in that case, the merchant would abandon his bargains, and the farmer would leave the ingathering of his harvests, and even the drunkard would hie homeward from the midst of his revel, and *that* twenty-one days would be spent, without much sleep, and with many prayers. And yet, it cannot be denied, that the consequences of a vicious education, inflicted upon a child, are now precisely the same as they would be, if, at the end of twenty-one days after an infant's birth, his tongue were already roughened with oaths and blasphemy; or he were seen skulking through society, obtaining credit upon false pretences, or with rolls of counterfeit bills in his pocket; or were already expiating his offences in the bondage and infamy of a prison.

And the consequences of a virtuous education, at the end of twenty-one years, are now precisely the same as they would be, if, at the end of twenty-one days after his birth, the infant had risen from his cradle into the majestic form of manhood, and were possessed of all those qualities and attributes, which a being created in the image of God ought to have;—with a power of fifty years of beneficent labor compacted into his frame;—with nerves of sympathy, reaching out from his own heart and twining around the heart of society, so that the great social wants of men should be a part of his consciousness;—and with a mind able to perceive what is right, prompt to defend it, or, if need be, to die for it. It ought to be understood, that none of these consequences become any the less certain, because they are more remote. It ought to be universally understood and intimately felt, that, in regard to children, all precept and example; all kindness and harshness; all rebuke and commendation; all forms, indeed, of direct or indirect education; affect mental growth, just as dew, and sun, and shower, or untimely frost, affect vegetable growth. Their influences are integrated and made one with the soul. They enter into spiritual combination with it, never afterwards to be wholly decompounded. They are like the daily food eaten by wild game,—so pungent and saporific in its nature, that it flavors every fibre of their flesh, and colors every bone in their body. Indeed, so pervading and enduring is the effect of education upon the youthful soul, that it may well be compared to a certain species of writing-ink, whose color, at

first, is scarcely perceptible, but which penetrates deeper and grows blacker by age, until, if you consume the scroll over a coal-fire, the character will still be legible in the cinders. It ought to be understood and felt, that, however it may be, in a social or jurisprudential sense, it is nevertheless true, in the most solemn and dread-inspiring sense, that, by an irrepealable law of Nature, the iniquities of the fathers are still visited upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation. Nor do the children suffer for the iniquities only, of their parents; they suffer for their neglect and even for their ignorance. Hence, I have always admired that law of the Icelanders, by which, when a minor child commits an offence, the courts first make judicial inquiry, whether his parents have given him a good education; and, if it be proved they have not, the child is acquitted and the parents are punished. In both the old Colonies of Plymouth, and of Massachusetts Bay, if a child, over sixteen, and under twenty-one years of age, committed a certain capital offence against father or mother, he was allowed to arrest judgment of death upon himself, by showing that his parents, in the language of the law, "had been very unchristianly negligent in his education."

### *Methods of Teaching*

How, then, are the purposes of education to be accomplished? However other worlds may be, this world of ours is evidently constructed on the plan of producing ends by using means. Even the Deity, with his Omni-

science and his Omnipotence, carries forward our system, by processes so minute, and movements so subtile, as generally to elude our keenest inspection. He might speak all the harvests of the earth, and all the races of animals and of men into full-formed existence, at a word; and yet, the tree is elaborated from the kernel, and the wing from the chrysalis, by a series of processes, which occupies years, and sometimes centuries, for its completion. Education, more than any thing else, demands not only a scientific acquaintance with mental laws, but the nicest art in the detail and the application of means, for its successful prosecution; because influences, imperceptible in childhood, work out more and more broadly into beauty or deformity, in after-life. No unskilful hand should ever play upon a harp, where the tones are left, forever, in the strings.

In the first place, the best methods should be well ascertained; in the second, they should be universally diffused. In this Commonwealth, there are about three thousand Public Schools, in all of which the rudiments of knowledge are taught. These schools, at the present time, are so many distinct, independent communities; each being governed by its own habits, traditions, and local customs. There is no common, superintending power over them; there is no bond of brotherhood or family between them. They are strangers and aliens to each other. The teachers are, as it were, imbedded, each in his own school district; and they are yet to be excavated, and brought together, and to be established, each as a polished pillar of a holy temple. As the system

is now administered, if any improvement in principles or modes of teaching is discovered by talent or accident, in one school,—instead of being published to the world, it dies with the discoverer. No means exist for multiplying new truths, or even for preserving old ones. A gentleman, filling one of the highest civil offices in this Commonwealth,—a resident in one of the oldest counties and in one of the largest towns in the State,—a sincere friend of the cause of education,—recently put into my hands a printed report, drawn up by a clergyman of much repute, which described, as was supposed, an important improvement, in relation to our Common Schools, and earnestly enjoined its general adoption; when it happened to be within my own knowledge, that the supposed new discovery had been in successful operation for sixteen years, in a town but little more than sixteen miles distant. Now, in other things, we act otherwise. If a manufacturer discover a new combination of wheels, or a new mode of applying water or steam-power, by which stock can be economized, or the value of fabrics enhanced ten per cent., the information flies over the country, at once; the old machinery is discarded, the new is substituted. Nay, it is difficult for an inventor to preserve the secret of his invention, until he can secure it by letters-patent. Our mechanics seem to possess a sort of keen, grey-hound faculty, by which they can scent an improvement afar off. They will sometimes go, in disguise, to the inventor and offer themselves as workmen; and instances have been known of their breaking into his workshop, by night, and pur-

loining the invention. And hence that progress in the mechanic arts, which has given a name to the age in which we live, and made it a common wonder. Improvements in useful, and often in useless, arts, command solid prices,—twenty, fifty, or even a hundred, thousand dollars,—while improvements in education, in the means of obtaining new guaranties, for the permanence of all we hold dear, and for making our children and our children's children wiser and happier,—these are scarcely topics of conversation or inquiry. Do we not need, then, some new and living institution, some animate organization, which shall at least embody and diffuse all that is now known on this subject, and thereby save, every year, hundreds of children from being sacrificed to experiments which have been a hundred times exploded?

Before noticing some particulars, in which a common channel for receiving and for disseminating information, may subserve the prosperity of our Common Schools, allow me to premise, that there is one rule, which, in all places and in all forms of education, should be held as primary, paramount, and, as far as possible, exclusive. Acquirement and pleasure should go hand in hand. They should never part company. The pleasure of acquiring should be the incitement to acquire. A child is wholly incapable of appreciating the ultimate value or uses of knowledge. In its early beginnings, the motive of general, future utility will be urged in vain. Tell an abecedarian, as an inducement to learn his letters, of the sublimities of poetry and eloquence, that may be wrought out of the alphabet; and to him it is not so good as

moonshine. Let me ask any man, whether he ever had, when a child, any just conception of the uses, to which he is now, as a man, daily applying his knowledge. How vain is it, then, to urge upon a child, as a motive to study, that which he cannot possibly understand! Nor is the motive of fear preferable. Fear is one of the most debasing and dementalizing of all the passions. The sentiment of fear was given us, that it might be roused into action, by whatever should be shunned, scorned, abhorred. The emotion should never be associated with what is to be desired, toiled for, and loved. If a child appetizes his books, then, lesson-getting is free labor. If he revolts at them, then, it is slave-labor. Less is done, and the little is not so well done. Nature has implanted a feeling of curiosity in the breast of every child, as if to make herself certain of his activity and progress. The desire of learning alternates with the desire of food; the mental with the bodily appetite. The former is even more craving and exigent, in its nature, than the latter, and acts longer without satiety. Men sit with folded arms, even while they are surrounded by objects of which they know nothing. Who ever saw that done by a child? But we cloy, disgust, half-extirpate, this appetite for knowledge, and then deny its existence. Mark a child, when a clear, well-defined, vivid conception seizes it. The whole nervous tissue vibrates; every muscle leaps; every joint plays. The face becomes auroral. The spirit flashes through the body, like lightning through a cloud. Tell a child the simplest story, which is adapted to his present state of mental advancement, and therefore intel-

ligible,—and he will forget sleep, leave food untasted, nor would he be enticed from hearing it, though you gave him, for playthings, shining fragments broken off from the sun. Observe the blind, and the deaf and dumb. So strong is their inborn desire for knowledge, that, although those natural inlets, the eye and the ear, are closed; yet, such are the amazing attractive forces of the mind for it, that they will draw it inward, through the solid walls and encasements of the body. If the eye be curtained with darkness, it will enter through the ear. If the ear be closed in silence, it will ascend along the nerves of touch. Every new idea, that enters into the presence of the sovereign mind, carries offerings of delight with it, to make its coming welcome. Indeed, our Maker created us in blank ignorance for the very purpose of giving us the boundless, endless pleasure of learning new things; and the true path for the human intellect leads from ignorance to omniscience,—ascending by an infinity of truths, each novel and delightful.

The voice of Nature, therefore, forbids the infliction of annoyance, discomfort, pain, upon a child, while engaged in study. If he actually suffer from position, or heat, or cold, or fear, not only is a portion of the energy of his mind withdrawn from his lesson,—all of which should be concentrated upon it;—but, at that indiscriminating age, the pain blends itself with the study, makes part of the remembrance of it; and thus curiosity and the love of learning are deadened, or turned away towards vicious objects. This is the philosophy of children's hating study. We insulate them by fear; we touch them

**Deluge.** I called and inquired of the mistress, if she and her little ones were not sometimes drowned out. She said she should be, except that the floor leaked as badly as the roof, and drained off the water. And yet a healthful, comfortable schoolhouse can be erected as cheaply as one, which, judging from its construction, you would say, had been dedicated to the evil genius of deformity and suffering.

There is another evil in the construction of our school-houses, whose immediate consequences are not so bad, though their remote ones are indefinitely worse. No fact is now better established, than that a man cannot live, without a supply of about a gallon of fresh air, every minute; nor enjoy good health, indeed, without much more. The common air, as is now well known, is mainly composed of two ingredients, one only of which can sustain life. The action of the lungs upon the vital portion of the air changes its very nature, converting it from a life-sustaining to a life-destroying element. As we inhale a portion of the atmosphere, it is healthful;—the same portion, as we exhale it, is poisonous. Hence, ventilation in rooms, especially where large numbers are collected, is a condition of health and life. Privation admits of no excuse. To deprive a child of comfortable clothes, or wholesome food, or fuel, may sometimes, possibly, be palliated. These cost money, and often draw hardly upon the scanty resources of the poor. But what shall we say of stinting and starving a child, in regard to this necessary of life?—of holding his mouth, as it were, lest he should obtain a sufficiency of that

vital air which God, in His munificence, has poured out, almost fifty miles deep, all around the globe? Of productions, reared or transported by human toil, there may be a dearth. At any rate, frugality in such things is commendable. But to put a child on short allowances out of this sky-full of air, is enough to make a miser weep. It is as absurd, as it would have been for Noah, while the torrents of rain were still descending, to have put his family upon short allowances of water. This vast quantity of air was given us to supersede the necessity of ever using it, at second-hand. Heaven has ordained this matter with adorable wisdom. That very portion of the air which we have turned into poison, by respiring it, is the aliment of vegetation. What is death to us, is life to all verdure and flowerage. And again, vegetation rejects the ingredient which is life to us. Thus the equilibrium is forever restored; or rather, it is never destroyed. In this perpetual circuit, the atmosphere is for ever renovated, and made the sustainer of life, both for the animal and vegetable worlds.

A simple contrivance for ventilating the schoolroom, unattended with any perceptible expense, would rescue children from this fatal, though unseen evil. It is an indisputable fact, that, for years past, far more attention has been paid, in this respect, to the construction of jails and prisons, than to that of schoolhouses. Yet, why should we treat our felons better than our children? I have observed in all our cities and populous towns, that, wherever stables have been recently built, provision has been made for their ventilation. This is encouraging,

for I hope the children's turn will come, when gentlemen shall have taken care of their horses. I implore physicians to act upon this evil. Let it be removed, extirpated, cut off, surgically.

I cannot here stop to give even an index of the advantages of an agreeable site for a schoolhouse; of attractive, external appearance; of internal finish, neatness, and adaptation; nor of the still more important subject of having two rooms for all large schools,—both on the same floor, or one over the other,—so as to allow a separation of the large from the small scholars, for the purpose of placing the latter, at least, under the care of a female teacher. Each of these topics, and especially the last, is worthy of a separate essay. Allow me, however, to remark, in passing, that I regard it as one of the clearest ordinances of Nature, that woman is the appointed guide and guardian of children of a tender age. And she does not forego, but, in the eye of prophetic vision, she anticipates and makes her own, all the immortal honors of the academy, the forum, and the senate, when she lays their deep foundations, by training up children in the way they should go.

A great mischief,—I use the word *mischief*, because it implies a certain degree of wickedness,—a great mischief is suffered in the diversity and multiplicity of our school-books. Not more than twenty or thirty different kinds of books, exclusive of a school library, are needed in our Common Schools; and yet, though I should not dare state the fact, if I had not personally sought out the information from most authentic sources, there are now,

in actual use in the schools of this State, more than three hundred different kinds of books; and, in the markets of this and the neighboring States, seeking for our adoption, I know not how many hundreds more. The standards, in spelling, pronunciation, and writing; in rules of grammar and in processes in arithmetic; are as various as the books. Correct language, in one place, is provincialism in another. While we agree in regarding the confusion of Babel as a judgment, we unite in confounding it more, as though it were a blessing. But is not uniformity on these subjects desirable? Are there not some of these books to which all good judges, on comparison, would award the preference? Could not they be afforded much cheaper for the great market which uniformity would open; thus furnishing better books at lower prices? And why not teach children aright, the first time? It is much harder to unlearn, than to learn. Why go through three processes, instead of one, by first learning, then unlearning, and then learning, again? This mischief grew out of the immense profits formerly realized from the manufacture of school-books. There seems never to have been any difficulty in procuring reams of recommendations, because patrons have acted under no responsibility. An edition once published must be sold; for the date has become almost as important in school-books, as in almanacs. All manner of devices are daily used to displace the old books and to foist in new ones. The compiler has a cousin in the town of A, who will decry the old and recommend the new; or a literary gentleman

in the city of B has just published some book on a different subject, and is willing to exchange recommendations, even; or the author has a mechanical friend, in a neighboring town, who has just patented some new tool, and who will recommend the author's book, if the author will recommend his tool. Publishers often employ agents to hawk their books about the country; and I have known several instances where such a pedlar,—or picaroon,—has taken all the old books of a whole class in school, in exchange for his new ones, book for book,—looking, of course, to his chance of making sales after the book had been established in the school, for reimbursement and profits; so that at last, the children have to pay for what they supposed was given them. On this subject, too, cannot the mature views of competent and disinterested men, residing, respectively, in all parts of the State, be the means of effecting a much-needed reform?

There is another point, where, as it seems to me, a united effort among the friends of education would, in certain branches of instruction, increase tenfold the efficiency of our Common Schools. I mean, the use of some simple apparatus, so as to employ the eye, more than the ear, in the acquisition of knowledge. After the earliest years of childhood, the superiority of the eye over the other senses, in quickness, in precision, in the vastness of its field of operations, and in its power of penetrating, like a flash into any interstices, where light can go and come, is almost infinite. The senses of taste, and smell, and touch, seem to be more the servants of

the body than of the soul; and, amongst the infinite variety of objects in the external world, hearing takes notice of sounds only. Close your eyes, and then, with the aid of the other senses, examine a watch, an artisan's workshop, a manufactory, a ship, a steam-engine; and how meager and formless are all the ideas, they present to you. But the eye is the great thorough-fare between the outward and material infinite, and the inward and spiritual infinite. The mind often acquires, by a glance of the eye, what volumes of books and months of study could not reveal so livingly through the ear. Every thing that comes through the eye, too, has a vividness, a clear outline, a just collocation of parts,—each in its proper place,—which the other senses can never communicate. Ideas or impressions acquired through vision are long-lived. Those acquired through the agency of the other senses often die young. Hence, the immeasurable superiority of this organ is founded in Nature. There is a fund of truth in the old saying, that "seeing is believing." There never will be any such maxim, in regard to the other senses. To use the ear instead of the eye, in any case where the latter is available, is as preposterous, as it would be for our migratory birds, in their overland passage, to walk rather than to fly. We laugh at the Westphalians, because, in using their oxen, they attach the load to the horns, instead of the neck; but do we not commit a much greater absurdity, in communicating knowledge through the narrow fissure of the ear, which holds communication only with a small circle of things, and in that circle, only with things that

utter a sound, instead of conveying it through the broad portals of the earth and heaven surveying eye. Nine tenths,—may I not say ninety-nine hundredths,—of all our Common-School instruction is conveyed through the ear; or,—which is the same thing,—through the medium of written instead of spoken words, where the eye has been taught to do the work of the ear. In teaching those parts of geography, which comprise the outlines and natural features of the earth, and in astronomy, the use of the globe and planetarium would reduce the labor of months to as many hours. Ocular evidence, also, is often indispensable for correcting the imperfections of language, as understood by a child. For instance, (and I take this illustration from fact and not from imagination,) a child, born in the interior, and who has never seen the ocean, is taught that the earth is *surrounded* by an elastic medium, called the atmosphere. He thereby gets the idea of perfect circumfusion and envelopment. In the next lesson, he is taught that an island is a small body of land surrounded by water. If he have a quick mind, he may get the idea that an island is land, enveloped in water, as the earth is in air. Mature minds always modify the meaning of words and sentences by numerous rules, of which a child knows nothing. If, when speaking of the Deity to a man of common intelligence, I use the word "power," he understands omnipotence; and if I use the same word, when speaking of an ant, he understands that I mean strength enough to lift a grain;—but a child would require explanations,

limiting the meaning of the word in the one case, and extending it in the other.

Other things being equal, the pleasure which a child enjoys, in studying or contemplating, is proportioned to the liveliness of his perceptions and ideas. A child who spurns books will be attracted and delighted by visible objects of well-defined forms and striking colors. In the one case, he sees things through a haze; in the other, by sunlight. A contemplative child, whose mind gets as vivid images from reading as from gazing, always prefers reading. Although it is undoubtedly true, that taste and predilection, in regard to any subject, will give brightness and distinctness to ideas; yet it is also true that bright and distinct ideas will greatly modify tastes and predilections. Now the eye may be employed much more extensively than it ever has been, in giving what I will venture to call the geography of ideas, that is, a perception, where one idea bounds on another,—where the province of one idea ends, and that of the adjacent ideas begins. Could children be habituated to fixing these lines of demarcation, to seeing and feeling ideas as distinctly as though they were geometrical solids, they would then experience an insupportable uneasiness, whenever they were lost in fog-land and among the Isles of the Mist; and this uneasiness would enforce investigation, survey, and perpetual outlook; and in after-life, a power would exist of applying luminous and exact thought to extensive combinations of facts and principles, and we should have the materials of philosophers, statesmen and chief-justices. The pleasure which chil-

dren enjoy in visiting our miserable toy-shop collections,—the dreams of crazy brains, *done* into wood and pewter,—comes mainly from the vividness, the oneness, the wholeness, completeness, of their perceptions. The gewgaws do not give delight, because of their grotesqueness, but in spite of it. Natural ideas derived through a microscope, or from any mechanism which would stamp as deep an imprint and glow with as quick a vitality, would give them far greater delight. And how different, as to attainments in useful knowledge, would children be, at the end of eight or ten years, accordingly as they had sought their gratifications from one or the other of these sources.

And what higher delight, what reward, at once so innocent and so elevating, as to explain by means of a suitable apparatus, to the larger scholars in a school, the cause and manner of an eclipse of the sun or moon! And when those impressive phenomena occur, how beautiful to witness the manifestations of wonder and of reverence for God, which spring spontaneously from the intelligent observation of such sublime spectacles; instead of their being regarded with the horrible imaginings of superstition, or with such stupid amazement, as belongs only to the brutes that perish! If a model were given, every ingenious boy, with a few broken window panes and a pocket-knife, could make a prism. With this, the rainbow, the changing colors of the dew-drop, the gorgeous light of the sunset sky, could be explained: and thus might the minds of children be early imbued with a love of pure and beautiful things, and led upward

towards the angel, instead of downward towards the brute, from this middle ground of humanity. Imbue the young mind with these sacred influences, and they will forever constitute a part of its moral being; they will abide with it and tend to uphold and purify it, wherever it may be cast by fortune, in this tumultuous arena of life. A spirit, so softened and penetrated, will be,

“Like the vase in which roses have once been distill’d;  
You may break, you may ruin the vase, if you will,  
But the scent of the roses will hang round it still.”

At the last session of the Legislature, a law was enacted, authorizing school districts to raise money for the purchase of apparatus and Common-School libraries, for the use of the children, to be expended in sums not exceeding thirty dollars, for the first year, and ten dollars, for any succeeding year. Trifling as this may appear, yet I regard the law as hardly second in importance to any which has been passed since the year 1647, when Common Schools were established. Every district can find some secure place for preserving them, until, in repairing or rebuilding schoolhouses, a separate apartment can be provided for their safe-keeping. As soon as one half the benefits of these instruments of learning shall be understood, I doubt not that public-spirited individuals will be found, in most towns, who will contribute something to the library; and artisans, too, who will feel an honorable pleasure in adding something to the apparatus, wrought by their own hands,—perhaps devised by their own ingenuity. “Build dove-holes,” says

the proverb, "and the doves will come." And what purer satisfaction, what more sacred object of ambition, can any man propose to himself, than to give the first impulse to an improvement, which will go on increasing in value, forever! It may be said, that mischievous children will destroy or mutilate whatever is obtained for this purpose. But children will not destroy or injure what gives them pleasure. Indeed, the love of malicious mischief, the proneness to deface whatever is beautiful,—this vile ingredient in the old Saxon blood, wherever it flows, originated, and it is aggravated, by the almost total want, amongst us, of objects of beauty, taste, and elegance, for our children to grow up with, to admire, and to protect.

The expediency of having District-School Libraries is fast becoming a necessity. It is too late to stop the art of printing, or to arrest the general circulation of books. Reading of some kind, the children will have; and the question is, whether it is best, that this reading should be supplied to them by the choice of men, whose sole object is gain; or whether it shall be prepared by wise and benevolent men, whose object is to do good. Probably, not one child in ten, in this State, has free access to any library of useful and entertaining knowledge. Where there are town, parish, or social, libraries, they either do not consist of suitable books, or they are burdened with restrictions which exclude more than are admitted. A District-School Library would be open to all the children in the district. They would enter it independently. Wherever there is genius, the library

would nourish it. Talents would not die of inaction, for want of a sphere for exercise. Habits of reading and reflection would be formed, instead of habits of idleness and malicious mischief. The wealth and prosperity of Massachusetts are not owing to natural position or resources. They exist in despite of a sterile soil and an inhospitable clime. They do not come from the earth, but from the ingenuity and frugality of the people. Their origin is good thinking, carried out into good action; and intelligent reading in a child will result in good thinking in the man or woman. But there is danger, it is said, of reading bad books. So there is danger of eating bad food; shall we therefore have no harvests? No! It was the kindling excitement of a few books, by which those Massachusetts boys, John Adams and Benjamin Franklin, first struck out an intellectual spark, which broadened into magnitude and brightened into splendor, until it became a mighty luminary, which now stands and shall forever stand, among the greater lights in the firmament of glory.

But in the selection of books for school libraries, let every man stand upon his honor, and never ask for the introduction of any book, because it favors the distinctive views of his sect or party. A wise man prizes only the free and intelligent assent of unprejudiced minds; he disdains a slavish and noncompos echo, even to his best-loved opinions. In striving together for a common end, peculiar ends must neither be advocated nor assailed. Strengthen the intellect of children, by exercise upon the objects and the laws of Nature; train their feelings to

habits of order, industry, temperance, justice; to the love of man, because of his wants, and to the love of God, because of his universally-acknowledged perfections; and, so far as public measures, applicable to all, can reach, you have the highest human assurance, that, when they grow up, they will adopt your favorite opinions, if they are right, or discover the true reasons for discarding them, if they are wrong.

An advantage altogether invaluable, of supplying a child, by means of a library and of apparatus, with vivid ideas and illustrations, is, that he may always be possessed, in his own mind, of correct standards and types with which to compare whatever objects he may see in his excursions abroad;—and that he may also have useful subjects of reflection, whenever his attention is not engrossed by external things. A boy who is made clearly to understand the philosophical principle, on which he flies his kite, and then to recognize the same principle in a wind, or a water-wheel, and in the sailing of a ship;—wherever business or pleasure may afterwards lead him, if he sees that principle in operation, he will mentally refer to it, and think out its applications, when, otherwise, he would be singing or whistling. Twenty years would work out immense results from such daily observation and reflection. Dr. Franklin attributed much of his practical turn of mind,—which was the salient point of his immortality,—to the fact, that his father, in his conversations before the family, always discussed some useful subject, or developed some just principle of individual or social action, instead of talking forever

about trout-catching or grouse-shooting; about dogs, dinners, dice, or trumps. In its moral bearings, this subject grows into immense importance. How many months,—may I not say years,—in a child's life, when with spontaneous activity, his mind hovers and floats wherever it listeth! As he sits at home, amid familiar objects, or walks frequent paths, or lies listlessly in his bed, if his mind be not preoccupied with some substantial subjects of thought, the best that you can hope is, that it will wander through dreamland, and expend its activity in chasing shadows. Far more probable is it, especially if the child is exposed to the contamination of profane or obscene minds, that, in these seasons of solitude and reverie, the cockatrice's eggs of impure thoughts and desires will be hatched. And what *boy*, at least, is there who is not in daily peril of being corrupted by the evil communications of his elders. We all know, that there are self-styled gentlemen amongst us,—*self-styled gentlemen*,—who daily, and hourly, lap their tongues in the foulness of profanity; and though, through a morally insane perversion, they may restrain themselves, in the presence of ladies and of clergymen, yet it is only for the passing hour, when they hesitate not to pour out the pent-up flood, to deluge and defile the spotless purity of childhood,—and this, too, at an age, when these polluting stains sink, centre-deep, into their young and tender hearts, so that no moral bleachery can ever afterwards wholly cleanse and purify them. No parent, no teacher, can ever feel any rational security about the growth of the moral nature of his child, unless he contrives in

some way, to learn the tenor of his secret, silent meditations, or prepares the means, beforehand, of determining what those meditations shall be. A child may soon find it no difficult thing, to converse and act by a set of approved rules, and then to retire into the secret chambers of his own soul, and there to riot and gloat upon guilty pleasures, whose act would be perdition, and would turn the fondest home into a hell. But there is an antidote,—I do not say for all, but for most of this peril. The mind of children can be supplied with vivid illustrations of the works of Nature and of Art; its chambers can be hung round with picture-thoughts and images of truth, and charity, and justice, and affection, which will be companions to the soul, when no earthly friend can accompany it.

It is only a further development of this topic, to consider the inaptitude of many of our educational processes, for making accurately-thinking minds. It has been said by some, that the good sense, the sound judgment, which we find in the community, are only what have escaped the general ravage of a bad education. School studies ought to be so arranged, as to promote a harmonious development of the faculties. In despotic Prussia, a special science is cultivated, under the name of *methodik*, the scope of which is to arrange and adapt studies, so as to meet the wants and exercise the powers of the opening mind. In free America, we have not the name,—indeed we can scarcely be said to have the idea. Surely, the farmer, the gardener, the florist, who have established rules for cultivating every species of grain, and fruit,

and flower, cannot doubt, that, in the unfolding and expanding of the young mind, some processes will be congenial, others fatal. Those whose business it is, to compound ingredients, in any art, weigh them with the nicest exactness, and watch the precise moments of their chemical combinations. The mechanic selects all his materials with the nicest care, and measures all their dimensions to a hair's breadth; and he knows that if he fails in aught, he will produce a weak, loose, irregular, fabric. Indeed, can you name any business, avocation, profession, or employment, whatever,—even to the making of hobnails or wooden skewers,—where chance, ignorance, or accident, is ever rewarded with a perfect product? But in no calling is there such a diversity as in education,—diversity in principles, diversity in the application of those principles. Discussion, elucidation, the light of a thousand minds brought to a focus, would result in discarding the worst and in improving even the best. Under this head are included the great questions respecting the order and succession of studies; the periods of alternation between them; the proportion between the exact and the approximate sciences; and what is principal and what is subsidiary, in pursuing them.

There is a natural order and progression in the development of the faculties: "First the blade, then the ear, afterwards the full corn in the ear." And in the mind, as in the grain, the blade may be so treated that the full corn will never appear. For instance, if any faculty is brooded upon and warmed into life before the period

of its natural development, it will have a precocious growth, to be followed by weakness, or by a want of symmetry and proportion in the whole character. Consequences still worse will follow, where faculties are cultivated in the reverse order of their natural development. Again, if collective ideas are forced into a child's mind, without his being made to analyze them, and understand the individual ideas of which they are composed, the probability is, that the collective idea will never be comprehended. Let me illustrate this position by a case where it is least likely to happen, that we may form some idea of its frequency, in other things. A child is taught to count *ten*. He is taught to repeat the words, *one, two, etc.*, as words, merely; and if care be not taken, he will attach no more comprehensive idea to the word *ten*, than he did to the word *one*. He will not think of ten ones, as he uses it. In the same way, he proceeds to use the words, hundred, thousand, million, etc.,—the idea in his mind, not keeping within hailing distance of the signification of the words used. Hence there is generated a habit of using words, not as the representatives of ideas, but as sounds, merely. How few children there are of the age of sixteen,—an age at which almost all of them have ceased their attendance upon our schools,—who have any adequate conception of the power of the signs they have been using. How few of them know even so simple a truth as this, that, if they were to count one, every second, for ten hours in a day, without intermission, it would take about twenty-eight days to count a million. Yet they have been talking of mil-

lions, and hundreds of millions as though they were units. Now, suppose you speak to such a person of millions of children, growing up under a highly elaborated system of vicious education, unbalanced by any good influences; or suppose you appeal to him, in behalf of a million of people wailing beneath the smitings of the oppressor's rod,—he gets no distinct idea of so many as fifty; and therefore he has no intellectual substratum, upon which to found an appropriate feeling, or by which to graduate its intensity.

Again, in geography, we put a quarto-sized map, or perhaps a globe no larger than a goose's egg, into a child's hands, and we invite him to spread out his mind over continents, oceans, and archipelagoes, at once. This process does not expand the mind of the child to the dimensions of the objects, but it belittles the objects to the nutshell capacity of the mind. Such a course of instruction may make precocious, green-house children; but you will invariably find, that, when boys are prematurely turned into little men, they remain little men, always. Physical geography should be commenced by making a child describe and plot a room with its fixtures, a house with its apartments, the adjoining yards, fields, roads or streets, hills, waters, etc. Then embracing, if possible, the occasion of a visit to a neighboring town, or county, that should be included. Here, perpetual reference must be had to the points of the compass. After a just extension has been given to his ideas of a county, or a state, then that county or state should be shown to him on a globe; and, cost what labor or time it may, his

mind must be expanded to a comprehension of relative magnitudes, so that his idea of the earth shall be as adequate to the size of the earth, as his idea of the house or the field was to the size of the house or the field. Thus the pupil finds his knowledge of unseen things upon the distinct notions of eyesight, in regard to familiar objects. Yet I believe it is not very uncommon to give the mind of the young learner a continent, for a single intellectual meal, and an ocean to wash it down with. It recently happened, in a school within my own knowledge, that a class of small scholars in geography, on being examined respecting the natural divisions of the earth,—its continents, oceans, islands, gulfs, etc.,—answered all the questions with admirable precision and promptness. They were then asked, by a visitor, some general questions respecting their lesson, and amongst others, whether they had ever seen the earth, about which they had been reciting; and they unanimously declared, in good faith, that they never had. Do we not find here an explanation, why there are so many men, whose conceptions on all subjects are laid down on so small a scale of miles,—so many thousand leagues to a hair's breadth? By these absurd processes, no vivid ideas can be gained, and therefore no pleasure is enjoyed. A capacity of wonder is destroyed in a day, sufficient to keep alive the flame of curiosity for years. The subjects of the lessons cease to be new, and yet are not understood. Curiosity, which is the hunger and thirst of the mind, is forever cheated and balked; for nothing but a real idea can give real, true, intellectual, gratification. A habit, too, is inevitably

formed of reciting, without thinking. At length, the most glib recitation becomes the best;—and the less the scholars are delayed by thought, the faster they can prate, as a mill clacks quicker, when there is no grist in the hopper. Thoroughness, therefore,—thoroughness, and again I say, *thoroughness*, for the sake of the knowledge, and still more for the sake of the habit,—should, at all events be enforced; and a pupil should never be suffered to leave any subject, until he can reach his arms quite around it, and clench his hands upon the opposite side. Those persons, who know a little of every thing but nothing well, have been aptly compared to a certain sort of pocket-knife, which some over-curious people carry about with them, which, in addition to a common knife, contains a file, a chisel, a saw, a gimlet, a screw-driver, and a pair of scissors, but all so diminutive, that the moment they are needed for use, they are found useless.

It seems to me that one of the greatest errors in education, at the present time, is the desire and ambition, at single lessons, to teach complex truths, whole systems, doctrines, theorems, which years of analysis are scarcely sufficient to unfold; instead of commencing with simple elements, and then rising, by gradations, to combined results. All is administered in a mass. We strive to introduce knowledge into the child's mind, the great end first. When lessons are given in this way, the pupil, being unable to comprehend the ideas, tries to remember the words, and thus, at best, is sent away with a single fact, instead of a principle, explanatory of whole classes of facts. The lessons are learned by rote; and when a

teacher practices upon the rote system, he uses the minds of the pupils, just as they use their own slates, in working arithmetical questions;—whenever a second question is to be wrought, the first is sponged out, to make room for it. What would be thought of a teacher of music, who should give his pupils the most complicated exercises, before they had learned to sound simple notes? It is said of the athlete, Milo of Crotona, that he began by lifting a calf, and, continuing to lift it daily, he gained strength as fast as the animal gained weight; so that he was able to lift it, when it became an ox. Had he begun by straining to lift an ox, he would probably have broken down, and been afterwards unable to lift even a calf. The point to which I would invite the regards of the whole community, is, whether greater attention should not be paid to gradation, to progression in a natural order, to adjustment, to the preparation of a child's mind for receiving the higher forms of truth, by first making it thoroughly acquainted with their elements. The temptation to this error is perhaps the most seductive, that ever beguiles a teacher from his duty. He desires to make his pupils *appear* well. He forgets that the great objects of education lie, in the power, and dignity, and virtue, of life, and not in the recitations, at the end of the quarter. Hence he strives to prepare his pupils for the hastening day of exhibition. They must be able to state, in words, the great results in science, which human reason has achieved, after almost sixty centuries of labor. For this purpose,—in which they also are tempted to conspire,—he loads their memories with

burden after burden of definitions and formulas; which is about as useful a process,—and is it not also about as honest?—as it would be for the rearer of nursery trees to buy golden pippins in the market, and, tying them upon the branches of his young trees, to palm them off upon purchasers, as though the delicious fruit had been elaborated from the succulence of the stock he sells.

Another question of method, to which I most earnestly solicit the attention of teachers and of the whole public, is, whether there is not too much teaching of words, instead of things. Never was a severer satire uttered against human reason, than that of Mirabeau, when he said, “words are things.” That single phrase explains the whole French Revolution. Such a revolution never could have occurred amongst a people who spoke things, instead of words. Just so far as words are things, just so far the infinite contexture of realities, pertaining to body and soul, to earth and heaven, to time and eternity, are nothing. The ashes, and shreds, and wrecks, of every thing else are of some value; but of words not freighted with ideas, there is no salvage. It is not *words*, but words *fitly spoken*, that are like apples of gold in pictures of silver. Words are but purses; things, the shining coin within them. Why buy seventy or eighty thousand purses,—for it is said we have about that number of untechnical words in the language,—without a copper for deposit? I believe it is almost universally true, that young students desire to be composers; and as universally true, that they dread composition. When they would compose, of what service, then, are those columns

of spelling-book words, which they have committed to memory, by the furlong. Where then, too, are the rich mines of thought contained in their Readers, their First-Class books, and their little libraries? These they have been accustomed to consider merely as instruments, to practice pronunciation, emphasis, and cadence, upon. They have moved, for years, in the midst of ideas, like blind men in picture-galleries. Hence they have no knowledge of things, and their relations; and, when called upon for composition, they have nothing to compound. But, as the outward and visible sign of composition is a sheet-full of words, a sheet is filled, though more from the dictionary than from the head. This practice comes, at last, to make them a kind of sportsmen or warriors, who think their whole business is to fire, not to hit. Some, who have a strong verbal memory, become dexterous in the use of language; so that, if they can have two ideas, on any subject, to set up at the ends, as termini, they will fill up with words any distance of space between them. Those who have not this verbal memory, become the wind-driven bubbles of those who have. When the habit is confirmed, of relying on the verbal faculty, the rest of the mind dies out. The dogma taught by Aristotle, that Nature abhors a vacuum, is experimentally refuted. I know of but one compensation for these word-men; I believe they never become insane. Insanity requires some mind, for a basis.

The subject of penal discipline, I hardly dare to mention; especially discipline by corporal punishment. In this department, extremes both of doctrine and practice

prevail. The public have taken sides, and parties are arrayed against each other. Some repudiate and condemn it, altogether. With others, it is the great motive power; they consider it as, at least, the first and second, if not the three estates in the realm of school-keeping. Generally speaking, I fear that but little judgment and fore-thought are brought to the decision of its momentous questions. It cannot be discussed, alone. It is closely connected with intellectual progress; its influences pervade the whole moral nature; and it must be looked at, in its relations to them. The justifiable occasions, if any, for inflicting it; the mode, and emphatically, the spirit, of its administration; its instruments, its extent; the conduct that should precede and should follow it,—are questions worthy of the deepest attention. That corporal punishment, considered by itself, and without reference to its ultimate object, is an evil, probably none will deny. Yet, with almost three thousand public schools in this State, composed of all kinds of children, with about six thousand teachers, of all grades of qualification, to govern them, probably the evil of corporal punishment must be endured, or the greater ones of insubordination and mutiny be incurred. I hesitate also to speak so fully of the magnitude of this evil, as I would wish to do; because there are some excellent teachers, who manage schools without resorting to it; while others, ambitious for the same honor, but destitute of skill and of the divine qualities of love, patience, sympathy, by which alone it can be won, have discarded what they call corporal punishment, but have resorted to other modes of

discipline, which, though they may bear a milder name, are, in reality more severe. To imprison timid children in a dark and solitary place; to brace open the jaws with a piece of wood; to torture the muscles and bones, by the strain of an unnatural position, or of holding an enormous weight; to inflict a wound upon the instinctive feelings of modesty and delicacy, by making a girl sit with the boys, or go out with them, at recess; to bring a whole class around a fellow-pupil, to ridicule and shame him; to break down the spirit of self-respect, by enforcing some ignominious compliance; to give a nickname;—these, and such as these, are the gentle appliances, by which some teachers, who profess to discard corporal punishment, maintain the empire of the school-room;—as though the muscles and bones were less corporeal than the skin; as though a wound of the spirit were of less moment than one in the flesh; and the body's blood more sacred than the soul's purity. But of these solemn topics, it is impossible here to speak. I cannot, however, forbear to express the opinion, that punishment should never be inflicted, except in cases of the extremest necessity; while the experiment of sympathy, confidence, persuasion, encouragement, should be repeated, for ever and ever. The fear of bodily pain is a degrading motive; but we have authority for saying, that where there is perfect love, every known law will be fulfilled. Parents and teachers often create that disgust at study, and that incorrigibleness and obstinancy of disposition, which they deplore. It is a sad exchange, if the very blows, which beat arithmetic and grammar

into a boy, should beat confidence and manliness out. So it is quite as important to consider what feelings are excited, in the mind, as what are subdued, by the punishment. Which side gains, though the evil spirit of roguery or wantonness be driven out, if seven other evil spirits, worse than the first,—sullenness, irreverence, fraud, lying, hatred, malice, revenge,—are allowed to come in? The motive from which the offence emanated, and the motives with which the culprit leaves the bar of his judge and executioner, are every thing. If these are not regarded, the offender may go away worse than he came, in addition to a gratuitous flagellation. To say a child knows better, is nothing; if he knows better, why does he not do better? The answer to this question reveals the difficulty; and whoever has not patience and sagacity to solve that inquiry, is as unworthy of the parental trust, as is the physician, of administering to the sick, who prescribes a fatal nostrum, and says, in justification, that he knew nothing of the disease. In fine, if any thing, in the wide range of education, demands patience, fore-thought, judgment, and the all-subduing spirit of love, it is this; and though it may be too much to say, that corporal punishment can be disused by all teachers, with regard to all scholars, in all schools, yet it may be averred, without exception, that it is never inflicted with the right spirit, nor in the right measure, when it is not more painful to him who imposes, than to him who receives it.

Of emulation in school, as an incitement to effort, I can here say but a word; but I entreat all intelligent men

to give to this subject a most careful consideration. And let those who use it, as a quickener of the intellect, beware, lest it prove a depraver of the social affections. There is no necessary incompatibility between the upward progress of one portion of our nature, and the lower and lower debasement of another. The intellect may grow wise, while the passions grow wicked. No cruelty towards a child can be so great as that which barters morals for attainment. If, under the fiery stimulus of emulation, the pupil comes to regard a successful rival with envy or malevolence, or an unsuccessful one with arrogance or disdain; if, in aiming at the goal of precedence, he loses sight of the goal of perfection; if, to gain his prize, he becomes the hypocrite, instead of the reverer of virtue;—then, though his intellect should enter upon the stage of life with all the honors of an early triumph; yet the noblest parts of his nature,—his moral and social affections,—will be the victims, led captive in the retinue. Suppose, in some Theological Seminary, a prize were offered for the best exposition of the commandment, "*Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself*"; and two known competitors were to task their intellects, to win it;—and, on the day of trial, one of these neighbor-loving rivals, with dilated nostril and expanded frame, should clutch the honor; while the other neighbor-loving rival, with quivering lip and livid countenance, stood by,—the vulture of envy, all the while, forking her talons into his heart;—would it not be that very mixture of the ludicrous and the horrible, which demons would choose for the subject of an epigram! Paint, or chisel the whole

group of neighbor-loving rivals, and pious doctors sitting around and mingling,—in one chalice, the hellebore of pride, and in another, the wormwood of defeat,—to be administered to those who should be brothers, and can aught be found more worthy to fill a niche in the council-hall of Pandemonium! Who has not seen winter, with its deepest congelations, come in between ingenuous-minded and loving fellow-students, whose hearts would otherwise have run together, like kindred drops of water? Who has not witnessed a consumption,—not of the lungs, but of the heart; nay, both of lungs and heart,—wasting its victims with the smothered frenzy of emulation? It surely is within the equity of the prayer, “lead *us* not into temptation,” not to lead others into it. And ought not the teacher, who, as a general and prevalent,—I do not say universal rule,—cannot sustain order and insure proficiency, in a school, without resorting to fear and emulation, to consider, whether the fault be in human nature or in himself? And will there ever be any more of that secret, silent beneficence amongst us, where the left hand knows not of the blessings scattered by the right?—will there ever be any less of this deadly strife for the ostensible signs of precedence, in the social and political arena, while the germs of emulation are so assiduously cultivated in the schoolroom, the academy, and the college? The pale ambition of men, ready to sacrifice country and kind for self, is only the fire of youthful emulation, heated to a white heat. Yet, there is an inborn sentiment of emulation, in all minds, and there are external related objects of that sentiment. The

excellent, who may be present with us, but who are advanced in life; the great and good, who are absent, but whose fame is everywhere; the illustrious dead;—these are the objects of emulation. A rivalry with these yields sacred love, not consuming envy. On these, therefore, let the emulous and aspiring gaze, until their eyes overflow with tears, and every tear will be the baptism of honor and of purity.

*Purposes of Education*

Such are some of the most obvious topics, belonging to that sacred work,—the education of children. The science, or philosophical principles on which this work is to be conducted; the art, or manner in which those principles are to be applied, must all be rightly settled and generally understood, before any system of Public Instruction can operate with efficiency. Yet all this has been mainly left to chance. Compared with its deserts, how disproportionate, how little, the labor, cost and talent, devoted to it. We have a Congress, convening annually, at almost incredible expense, to decide upon questions of tariff, internal improvement, and currency. We have a State Legislature, continuing in session more than a fourth part of every year, to regulate our internal polity. We have Courts, making continual circuits through the Commonwealth, to adjudicate upon doubtful rights of person or property, however trivial. Every great department of literature and of business has its Periodical. Every party, political, religious, and social,

has its Press. Yet Education, that vast cause, of which all other causes are only constituent parts; that cause, on which all other causes are dependent, for their vitality and usefulness,—if I except the American Institute of Instruction, and a few local, feeble, unpatronized, though worthy associations,—Education has literally nothing, in the way of comprehensive organization and of united effort, acting for a common end and under the focal light of a common intelligence. It is under these circumstances; it is in view of these great public wants, that the Board of Education has been established,—not to legislate, not to enforce,—but to collect facts, to educe principles, to diffuse a knowledge of improvements;—in fine, to submit the views of men who have thought much upon this subject to men who have thought but little.

To specify the labors, which education has yet to perform, would be only to pass in review the varied interests of humanity. [Its general purposes are to preserve the good and to repudiate the evil which now exists, and to give scope to the sublime law of progression.] It is its duty to take the accumulations in knowledge of almost six thousand years, and to transfer the vast treasure to posterity. Suspend its functions for but one generation, and the experience and achievements of the past are lost. The race must commence its fortunes, anew, and must again spend six thousand years, before it can grope its way upward from barbarism to the present point of civilization. With the wisdom, education must also teach something of the follies, of the past, for admonition and warning; for it has been well said,

that mankind have seldom arrived at truth, on any subject, until they had first exhausted its errors.

Education is to instruct the whole people in the proper care of the body, in order to augment the powers of that wonderful machine, and to prevent so much of disease, of suffering, and of premature death. The body is the mind's instrument; and the powers of the mind, like the skill of an artisan, may all be baffled, through the imperfection of their utensils. The happiness and the usefulness of thousands and tens of thousands of men and women have been destroyed, from not knowing a few of the simple laws of health, which they might have learned in a month;—nay, which might have been so impressed upon them, in childhood, as habits, that they would never think there was any other way. I do not speak of the ruin, that comes from slavery to throned appetites, where the bondage might continue in defiance of knowledge; but I speak of cases, where the prostration of noble powers and the suffering of terrible maladies result from sheer ignorance and false views of the wise laws to which God has subjected our physical nature. No doubt, Voltaire said truly, that the fate of many a nation had depended upon the good or bad digestion of its minister; and how much more extensively true would the remark be, if applied to individuals? How many men perfectly understand the observances by which their horses and cattle are made healthy and strong; while their children are puny, distempered, and have chronic diseases, at the very earliest age, at which so highly-finished an article as a chronic disease can be

prepared. There is a higher art than the art of the physician;—the art, not of *restoring*, but of *making* health. Health is a product. Health is a manufactured article,—as much so as any fabric of the loom or the workshop; and, except in some few cases of hereditary taint or of organic lesion from accident or violence, the how much, or the how little, health any man shall enjoy, depends upon his treatment of himself; or rather, upon the treatment of those who manage his infancy and childhood, and create his habits for him. Situated, as we are, in a high latitude, with the Atlantic ocean on one side and a range of mountains on the other, we cannot escape frequent and great transitions, in the temperature of our weather. Our region is the perpetual battleground of the torrid and the arctic, where they alternately prevail; and it is only by a sort of average that we call it *temperate*. Yet to this natural position we must adapt ourselves, or abandon it, or suffer. Hence the necessity of making health, in order to endure natural inclemencies; and hence the necessity of including the simple and benign laws on which it depends, in all our plans of education. Certainly, our hearts should glow with gratitude to Heaven, for all the means of health; but every expression indicating that health is a Divine gift, in any other sense than all our blessings are a Divine gift, should be discarded from the language; and it should be incorporated into the forms of speech, that a man prepares his own health, as he does his own house.

To inspire the love of truth, as the

supremest good, and to clarify the vision of the intellect to discern it. We want a generation of men above deciding great and eternal principles, upon narrow and selfish grounds. Our advanced state of civilization has evolved many complicated questions respecting social duties. We want a generation of men capable of taking up these complex questions, and of turning all sides of them towards the sun, and of examining them by the white light of reason, and not under the false colors which sophistry may throw upon them. We want no men who will change, like the vanes of our steeples, with the course of the popular wind; but we want men who, like mountains, will change the course of the wind. We want no more of those patriots who exhaust their patriotism, in lauding the past; but we want patriots who will do for the future what the past has done for us. We want men capable of deciding, not merely what is right, in principle,—*that* is often the smallest part of the case; but we want men capable of deciding what is right in means, to accomplish what is right in principle. We want men who will speak to this great people in counsel, and not in flattery. We want godlike men who can tame the madness of the times and, speaking divine words in a divine spirit, can say to the raging of human passions, "Peace, be still;" and usher in the calm of enlightened reason and conscience. Look at our community, divided into so many parties and factions, and these again subdivided, on all questions of social, national, and international, duty;—while, over all stands, almost unheeded, the sublime form of Truth,

eternally and indissolubly *One!* Nay, further, those do not agree in thought who agree in words. Their unanimity is a delusion. It arises from the imperfection of language. Could men, who subscribe to the same forms of words, but look into each other's minds, and see, there, what features their own idolized doctrines wear, friends would often start back from the friends they have loved, with as much abhorrence as from the enemies they have persecuted. Now, what can save us from endless contention, but the love of truth? What can save us, and our children after us, from eternal, implacable, universal war, but the greatest of all human powers,—the power of impartial thought? Many,—may I not say most,—of those great questions, which make the present age boil and seethe, like a cauldron, will never be settled, until we have a generation of men who were educated, from childhood, to seek for truth and to revere justice. In the middle of the last century, a great dispute arose among astronomers, respecting one of the planets. Some, in their folly, commenced a war of words, and wrote hot books against each other; others, in their wisdom, improved their telescopes, and soon settled the question forever. Education should imitate the latter. If there are momentous questions which, with present lights, we cannot demonstrate and determine, let us rear up stronger, and purer, and more impartial, minds, for the solemn arbitrament. Let it be for ever and ever inculcated, that no bodily wounds or maim; no deformity of person, nor disease of brain, or lungs, or heart, can be so disabling or so painful, as

error; and that he who heals us of our prejudices is a thousand-fold more our benefactor, than he who heals us of mortal maladies. Teach children, if you will, to beware of the bite of a mad dog; but teach them still more faithfully, that no horror of water is so fatal as a horror of truth, because it does not come from our leader or our party. Then shall we have more men who will think, as it were, under oath;—not thousandth and ten thousandth transmitters of falsity;—not copyists of copyists, and blind followers of blind followers; but men who can track the Deity in his ways of wisdom. A love of truth,—*a love of truth*; this is the pool of a moral Bethesda, whose waters have miraculous healing. And though we lament that we cannot bequeath to posterity this precious boon, in its perfectness, as the greatest of all patrimonies, yet let us rejoice that we can inspire a love of it, a reverence for it, a devotion to it; and thus circumscribe and weaken whatever is wrong, and enlarge and strengthen whatever is right, in the mixed inheritance of good and evil, which, in the order of Providence, one generation transmits to another.

If we contemplate the subject with the eye of a statesman, what resources are there, in the whole domain of Nature, at all comparable to that vast influx of power which comes into the world with every incoming generation of children? Each embryo life is more wonderful than the globe it is sent to inhabit, and more glorious than the sun upon which it first opens its eyes. Each one of these millions, with a fitting education, is capable of adding something to the sum of human happiness,

and of subtracting something from the sum of human misery; and many great souls amongst them there are, who may become instruments for turning the course of nations, as the rivers of water are turned. It is the duty of moral and religious education to employ and administer all these capacities of good, for lofty purposes of human beneficence,—as a wise minister employs the resources of a great empire. “Suffer little children to come unto me,” said the Savior, “and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of Heaven.” And who shall dare say, that philanthropy and religion cannot make a better world than the present, from beings like those in the kingdom of Heaven!

Education must be universal. It is well, when the wise and the learned discover new truths; but how much better to diffuse the truths already discovered, amongst the multitude! Every addition to true knowledge is an addition to human power; and while a philosopher is discovering one new truth, millions may be propagated amongst the people. Diffusion, then, rather than discovery, is the duty of our government. With us, the qualification of voters is as important as the qualification of governors, and even comes first, in the natural order. Yet there is no Sabbath of rest, in our contests about the latter, while so little is done to qualify the former. The theory of our government is,—not that all men, however unfit, shall be voters,—but that every man, by the power of reason and the sense of duty, shall become fit to be a voter. Education must bring the practice as nearly as possible to the theory.

As the children now are, so will the sovereigns soon be. How can we expect the fabric of the government to stand, if vicious materials are daily wrought into its frame-work? Education must prepare our citizens to become municipal officers, intelligent jurors, honest witnesses, legislators, or competent judges of legislation,—in fine, to fill all the manifold relations of life. For this end, it must be universal. The whole land must be watered with the streams of knowledge. It is not enough to have, here and there, a beautiful fountain playing in palace gardens; but let it come like the abundant fatness of the clouds upon the thirsting earth.

Finally, education, alone, can conduct us to that enjoyment which is, at once, best in quality and infinite in quantity. God has revealed to us,—not by ambiguous signs, but by his mighty works;—not in disputable language of human invention;—but by the solid substance and reality of things, what He holds to be valuable, and what He regards as of little account. The latter He has created sparingly, as though it were nothing worth; while the former He has poured forth with immeasurable munificence. I suppose all the diamonds ever found, could be hid under a bushel. The quantity is little, because the value is small. But iron-ore,—without which man-kind would always have been barbarians; without which they would now relapse into barbarism,—He has strewed profusely all over the earth. Compare the scantiness of pearl with the extent of forests and coal-fields. Of one, little has been created, because it is worth little; of the others, much, because they are worth

much. His fountains of naphtha, how few, and myrrh and frankincense, how exiguous; but who can fathom his reservoirs of water, or measure the light and the air! This principle pervades every realm of Nature. Creation seems to have been projected upon the plan of increasing the quantity, in the ratio of the intrinsic value. Emphatically is this plan manifested, when we come to that part of creation, we call *ourselves*. Enough of the materials of worldly good have been created to answer this great principle,—that, up to the point of competence, up to the point of independence and self-respect, few things are more valuable than property; beyond that point, few things are of less. And hence it is, that all acquisitions of property, beyond that point,—considered and used as mere property,—confer an inferior sort of pleasure, in inferior quantities. However rich a man may be, a certain number of thicknesses of woollens or of silks is all he can comfortably wear. Give him a dozen palaces, he can live in but one, at a time. Though the commander be worth the whole regiment, or ship's company, he can have the animal pleasure of eating only his own rations; and any other animal eats, with as much relish as he. Hence the wealthiest, with all their wealth, are driven back to a cultivated mind, to beneficent uses and appropriations; and it is then, and then only, that a glorious vista of happiness opens out into immensity and immortality.

Education, then, is to show to our youth, in early life, this broad line of demarcation between the value of those things which can be owned and enjoyed by but

one, and those which can be owned and enjoyed by all. If I own a ship, a house, a farm, or a mass of the metals called precious, my right to them is, in its nature, sole and exclusive. No other man has a right to trade with my ship, to occupy my house, to gather my harvests, or to appropriate my treasures to his use. They are mine, and are incapable, both of a sole and of a joint possession. But not so of the treasures of knowledge, which it is the duty of education to diffuse. The same truth may enrich and ennable all intelligences at once. Infinite diffusion subtracts nothing from depth. None are made poor because others are made rich. In this part of the Divine economy, the privilege of primogeniture attaches to all; and every son and daughter of Adam is heir to an infinite patrimony. If I own an exquisite picture or statue, it is mine, exclusively. Even though publicly exhibited, but few could be charmed by its beauties, at the same time. It is incapable of bestowing a pleasure, simultaneous and universal. But not so of the beauty of a moral sentiment; not so of the glow of sublime emotions; not so of the feelings of conscious purity and rectitude. These may shed rapture upon all, without deprivation of any; be imparted, and still possessed; transferred to millions, yet never surrendered; carried out of the world, and still left in it. These may impardise mankind, and undiluted, unattenuated, be sent round the whole orb of being. Let education, then, teach children this great truth, written, as it is, on the fore-front of the universe, that God has so constituted this world, into which He has sent them, that *whatever*

*is really and truly valuable may be possessed by all, and possessed in exhaustless abundance.*

And now, you, my friends! who feel that you are patriots and lovers of mankind,—what bulwarks, what ramparts for freedom, can you devise, so enduring and impregnable, as intelligence and virtue! Parents! among the happy groups of children whom you have at home,—more dear to you than the blood in the fountain of life,—you have not a son nor a daughter who, in this world of temptation, is not destined to encounter perils more dangerous than to walk a bridge of a single plank, over a dark and sweeping torrent, beneath. But it is in your power and at your option, with the means which Providence will graciously vouchsafe, to give them that firmness of intellectual movement and that keenness of moral vision,—that light of knowledge and that omnipotence of virtue,—by which, in the hour of trial, they will be able to walk, with unfaltering step, over the deep and yawning abyss, below, and to reach the opposite shore, in safety, and honor, and happiness.



PART III

THE LETTER TO SCHOOL CHILDREN

By

HORACE MANN



## PART III

### THE LETTER TO SCHOOL CHILDREN

#### *An Invitation and a Reply*

Horace Mann understood and appreciated children. In a day when punishments were harsh and frequent, he urged people not to arouse fear in the children but to reason with them and to quicken their natural desire for growth and self-improvement.

In the summer of 1846, Worthy Putnam, superintendent of the schools of Chautauque County, asked Horace Mann, whom he had met at a teachers' convention in Albany, to write a letter to the 20,000 school children of that county. Horace Mann was deeply touched by this request and wrote the letter to the children which is given here. The letter was published in many papers in the western states and especially in the state of New York. Many schools had reprints made to give to the children.

### THE LETTER TO SCHOOL CHILDREN

Boston, July 27, 1846.

*My dear children and friends, scholars in the schools of Chautauque County, New York:—Were you all gathered together in a beautiful grove, on the side of a hill, row after row, in such a great semicircle as you*

have seen in pictures, and I could be present there, I would say to you many things. But you all have sufficient knowledge of geography to know that Chautauque County, in the State of New York, and Boston, in Massachusetts, are many hundred miles from each other; and that broad rivers, on which the steamboats glide up and down, and great mountains, almost too high for the grass to grow or the birds to live on, lie between us. If Mr. Morse would come and lay down the wires of his magnetic telegraph between my room and your schools, I would make the bell tinkle many times every day, to call your attention, and then I would send you messages of good-will, and would try to put in some good advice.

I have been requested by your superintendent to make you a visit. I should most gladly do so, both on your account and his; for I lately became acquainted with him at Albany, and found him to be a most *worthy* man. Indeed, he has that excellent adjective prefixed to his name, as if it had been known from his infancy, how good a man he would be. He was called "Worthy" when a school child, like yourselves; and I have no doubt he will always conduct so as to deserve the title. If you have a *worthy* leader, you must not be *un-worthy* children.

I said that your superintendent had invited me to visit you. I will tell you the reason why I cannot go. There are in Massachusetts about two hundred thousand children, of whom I have the care, very much in the same way that Mr. Putnam has the care of you. All of these two hundred thousand children I am trying to make

wiser, better, and happier; and I say to myself, "If I can do each of these children a little good, when that little is multiplied by two hundred thousand, it will make a great deal." I doubt not the twenty thousand children of your county are present to the mind of your superintendent every day. So are the two hundred thousand children of Massachusetts present to my mind every day. I never lie down to sleep, nor rise from it, without thinking of them. They live in my heart. There are not hours enough in the day, nor days enough in the year, in which to work for them. I desire to give them the substantial blessing of deeds and sacrifices, rather than the empty one of words and forms. I wish to make all of them more punctual and regular at school, and more industrious and studious at all times,—for this would make them not a little happier. I wish to teach them to love their playmates, their brothers and sisters, their fathers and mothers, their teachers and all mankind more,—for this would make them much happier. I wish them all to know and feel how good their Creator is; how wise and benevolent in all he has created for their use, and what glorious provision he has made for their well-being, not for to-day only, or to-morrow, or next year, or their lifetime, but for a never-ending existence,—for this would make them supremely happy. But, though these two hundred thousand school children of Massachusetts seem to me to dwell here in my breast, so that I sympathize with all their pleasures and pains, and know and feel their wants, as if they had come and told them to me, yet when your superintendent bespoke

my interest in your behalf, I found my heart easily opened wide enough to take in twenty thousand more. Ay, children, you may smile at this, but it is true. The human heart is not like a box, or a trunk, or a bag, which will hold just so much and no more. A boy's heart is not like his vest or his jacket, which would split open if he should grow into a man in five minutes. The heart may be very small,—so small as only to embrace one's self in its thoughts and desires;—this makes a very mean, selfish person. The heart may be enlarged so as to embrace a town;—this makes a good townsman. Or it may take in one's whole nation;—this makes a patriot. Or it may take in all mankind;—this makes a philanthropist. Or it may embrace in its affections the whole universe and the great Creator of it;—this makes one godlike;—and, all the way, let me tell you, from the narrowest limit to the vastest expansion, its happiness will be in proportion to its enlargement.

*A Purpose for Everything*

My young friends, I wish to improve this opportunity to impress upon your minds one idea; and, as ideas are not so plenty as blackberries, when you can get one that is sound and true, you will do well to keep it, and to think of it a great deal. The truth which I wish you to understand is this; that every thing which the good God has made was made for some particular purpose or purposes, and not for others;—was made to be used in certain ways and at certain times, and not in

other ways or at other times. When anything is put to the use for which it was made, it does good; but if it be used for something for which it was not made, or for something contrary to that for which it was made, then it does great harm. And all this will be very plain to you, if you will think for a moment. Before God created any thing; before he made the sun, the moon, or the earth; before he caused the bright flowers to unfold from the bud, the tall oak to grow out of the acorn, or the beautiful bird to come out of its shell,—before he did any of these marvellous things, he knew exactly what would be needed; and, being all-powerful, he made just so many things as would be needed, and gave to each one of all the things he made its proper quality or fitness. You have all seen that, when a good carpenter or mason is going to build a house, he gets all the right kinds of materials together, and puts each one in its proper place. If he wishes to make a fireproof house,—that is, a house which cannot be burnt up,—he makes it of granite, and brick, and iron, and slate; he does not make it of touchwood, and cement it together with phosphorus, and stick the cornices and the fireplaces full of lucifer matches, for ornament. But touchwood, and phosphorus, and lucifer matches are very good *in their place*. They are good for certain purposes, but they are not good materials of which to build a fireproof house. So you would think a workman very foolish, if you saw him using a hammer, an adze, or an axe, made of glass; or use plates of cast-iron for window panes; or try to make a house stand on the ridgepole. Thus, in

all the works of Creation, every thing has its proper place and proper use. When used according to the original design in making it, it does great good; when used contrary to this design, it does great evil.

Some learned men have described this great truth, which I am trying to explain to you, by saying that God has given a "definite constitution" to every thing; but perhaps these are too hard words for all of you to understand. All they mean by them is, that God has fitted one thing for one purpose, and another thing for another purpose; and that, if we would prosper,—if we would not ruin ourselves and every body else,—we must use things as they were intended to be used.

For example, in our climate, God has made the whole vegetable world to grow in the summer, and not in the winter. Were we to plant or sow, expecting that corn, or wheat, or fruit, would grow during our winters only, we should gather no harvests, and must soon perish by starvation. God has made some fruits to ripen early, others late, so that we may enjoy them, one after another, the whole year. If all had been made to ripen at once, we should have a superabundance at one time, and a dearth at another. God has adapted the size of the fruits to the trees or plants on which they grow. If the pumpkin or the pine-apple, instead of the acorn and the chestnut, were to grow on tall trees, you know that men and cattle could not safely repose beneath branches laden with such fruit; and I suppose none of you have skulls so thick that you would be willing to stand under while the tree should be shaken.

By a beautiful provision of nature, ice is made to be a little lighter than its own bulk of water. The change takes place just the moment before it is turned from water into ice. The consequence is, the ice floats, and makes a beautiful surface for you to sport upon. Were the ice heavier than the water, by ever so small a degree, it would sink the moment it is formed; the next layer of water upon the surface would then freeze, which would also sink; and by and by, all ponds, rivers, and lakes would be frozen into a solid mass of ice, which all the heat of twenty summers would not be sufficient to thaw. Now think of this wise and wonderful provision the next time you go out to skate or slide.

Wood and coal were made to be burned, to keep your schoolhouses and your homes warm; and iron was made, among many other things, to be used in taking care of the fires that warm you. Suppose iron had been made so that it would burn as easily as wood,—we could not use it for fire apparatus nor for cooking utensils. Suppose, on the other hand, that wood and all other things which we use for fuel would burn no better than iron,—what then should we have to keep up our fires?

These are inanimate things, but the different races of animals were also all made for particular uses, and to live in a particular way. The fishes were made to swim in the sea; the birds were made to fly in the air; and the land animals were made to live upon the solid parts of the earth, there to get their food and there to rear their young. Suppose these races should try to alter the arrangements of Providence; suppose the land birds and

the fishes should make an agreement to exchange abodes, so that the vast flocks of pigeons, for instance, which you see flying over in the autumn, should leave the forests of oak, and should seek their food a thousand miles out at sea, while the fishes should come on shore, flopping their fins, and seeking a land passage to the Rocky Mountains. Or, suppose the quadrupeds,—such as the cattle, the hares, the foxes, and so forth,—should take it into their heads,—or heels,—that they could fly, and should ascend the highest rock or bluff, or,—such of them as could,—should climb up to the tops of barns, and houses, and steeples, and fling themselves into the air, expecting to equal the birds in their flight; should you not think that such of them as had any life left after the experiment, would need a very skilful bone-setter? Thus you see that all kinds of animals must live in the element they were made for by their Creator, and do the things, and only the things, which he designs they should do.

### *Things To Avoid*

So all of you, my dear children and friends, were made to live in a certain way and to do certain things; and there are other ways in which you cannot live, and other things which you must not do. You were made to live in the air and to breathe it. You were not made, like the fishes, to live in the water; and if, by any misfortune, you were to sink beneath its surface, or, by any force were to be kept there, you know that you would perish

by drowning in a very few minutes. Neither are you so made that you can live in the fire. Many tools which you use could not be made without fire; they have passed through it; they were melted in it; that was their nature, but it is not yours; and what made them better would destroy your life. The food you daily eat is prepared by the fierce action of fire; this is necessary in order to fit it for your use; but were you to be subjected to the same heat to which that is subjected for your sake, your life would be destroyed,—if you had so many lives, —every day in the year. You are not, like the birds, provided with wings, by which you can fly from tree to tree, from house to house, or from hill-top to hill-top; and were you to be so foolhardy as to ascend to the top of a tree, or house, or hill, and attempt to fly from it, you would be taken up a mangled corpse. Such things are contrary to your nature. They are not the things you were made for.

But there are many other things you were not made to do, and, which I must warn you, by the terrible pains and punishments that will come in their train, never to do. [You were not made to lie, or to steal, or to use profane or obscene language, or to be intemperate, or to quarrel with your schoolmates, or to be unkind to brothers or sisters, or disobedient to parents and teachers, or to scoff or to mock at what is holy and good.] I said you were not made to live in the fire; but it would be better that you should be flung into the hottest furnace that was ever kindled, than that you should train your tongues to falsehood, and perjury, and blasphemy. You

can be happier with the flames coming up all around you and scorching your flesh to a cinder, than you can be with a remorseful conscience glowing and burning in your bosom. I said you were not made to live in the water; but you had better tie a mill-stone about your neck and plunge into the depths of the sea, a thousand miles from the nearest shore or the nearest plank, than to begin a career of cheating and defrauding, and taking property that is not your own. I said you were not made to fly through the air; but you had better climb to the top of the highest tree or steeple, and fling yourself abroad to be dashed in pieces upon the rocks below, than to take the name of the great and the good God in vain, and to scoff at his attributes, his power and his justice. You had better ascend a volcano and leap from its crater into the boiling lava, than to go on indulging your appetite, by little and little, until you become a drunkard. You cannot do so great a harm to your bodies by plunging into fire, or water, or leaping from the precipice's edge, as you do to your souls when you break the commandments of the Lord. Your eyes were not made to covet what belongs to another; and it would be better that you should be blind, than that you should covet your neighbor's goods; for coveting is half-way to stealing. It would be better that your ears should be deaf, than that you should love to hear wicked and impure language; and that you should be dumb also rather than that your tongue should delight in uttering it. All these things, and all things like these, you were

not made to do; you cannot do them without great and terrible suffering.

### *Things To Do*

Having told you of some things you were not made to do, let me now tell you of some which you were made to do, just as much as the sun was made to radiate light, and not darkness; just as much as the trees were made to grow upwards, and not downwards; just as much as the birds were made to live in the air, and the fishes in the sea, without ever exchanging abodes.

*You were made to be industrious.* You should work. All your bones and muscles were made for work, just as much as the wheels of a clock or a watch were made to go round; and if you do not work in some way, you are as worthless as a clock made *not to go*. Industry gives health. Lazy people are not half so well as industrious ones are. Industry gives wealth. All the great fortunes that have ever been earned have been earned by industrious people (although, I am sorry to say, they are too often possessed by lazy ones); and it is highly proper that you should desire to earn money, if you intend to be benevolent, and mean to do good with it. Habits of industry will make you punctual at school, so that you can study and recite with the rest of the class. Why should you desire to be late, and, at this intellectual repast, sit down at the second table?

*You were made to be temperate.* The man who is always temperate enjoys a great deal more, in the long run, than one who gives way to excesses. Hence it has been well said, that the greatest epicure is the temperate

man. You must be temperate, not only in drinking, but in eating; and, indeed, in regard to all pleasures. It is right that you should enjoy your food, and your drink, and your sports. But when you have had enough, stop. Learn the meaning of that important word, *enough*.

*You were made to be clean and neat in your person and in your dress, and gentlemanly and ladylike in your manners.* If you have not been bitten by a mad dog, don't be afraid of fresh water. There is enough water in the world to keep every body clean; but there is a great deal of it that never finds its right place. In regard to this article there is no danger of being selfish. Take as much as you need. The people of the west boast of their great rivers,—I would rather they would boast of using a large tubful of their water every day.

Contract no such filthy and offensive habit as that of chewing or smoking tobacco. So long as a man chews or smokes, though a very Chesterfield in every thing else that pertains to his appearance, he can never be *quite* a gentleman. And, let me repeat it, you were made to be neat. While cotton cloth can be had for six cents a yard, there is no excuse for not having a pocket-handkerchief.

*You were made to be kind, and generous, and magnanimous.* If there is a boy in the school who has a club foot, don't let him know that you ever saw it. If there is a poor boy with ragged clothes, don't talk about rags when he is in hearing. If there is a lame boy, assign him some part of the game which does not require running. If there is a hungry one, give him a part of

your dinner. If there is a dull one, help him get his lessons. If there is a bright one, be not envious of him; for if one boy is proud of his talents, and another is envious of them, there are two great wrongs, and no more talents than before. If a larger or stronger boy has injured you, and is sorry for it, forgive him, and request the teacher not to punish him. All the school will show by their countenances how much better it is to have a great soul than a great fist.

*You were made to learn.* Be sure you learn something every day. When you go to bed at night, if you cannot think of something new which you have learned during the day, spring up and find a book, and get an idea before you sleep. If you were to stop eating, would not your bodies pine and famish? If you stop learning, your minds will pine and famish too. You all desire that your bodies should thrive and grow, until you become as tall and large as your fathers and mothers, or other people. You would not like to stop growing where you are now,—at three feet high, or four feet, or even at five. But if you do not feed your minds as well as your bodies, they will stop growing; and one of the poorest, meanest, most despicable things I have ever seen in the world, is a little mind in a great body.

Suppose there were a museum in your neighborhood, full of all rare and splendid curiosities,—should you not like to go and see it? Would you not think it almost unkind, if you were forbidden to visit it? The creation is a museum, all full and crowded with wonders, and beauties, and glories. One door, and one only, is open,

by which you can enter this magnificent temple. It is the door of knowledge. The learned laborer, the learned peasant, or slave, is ever made welcome at this door, while the ignorant, though kings, are shut out.

*Finally, you were made to be moral and religious.* Morality consists primarily in the performance of our duties to our fellow-men; religion in the performance of our duties to God. On the sublime and beautiful subject of morality, I have time only to touch upon one thing. That shall be *Honesty*. If all men were honest, we should need no jails nor prisons; no bolts nor locks; no high enclosures to keep out garden thieves; no criminal laws or courts. It is a shame to all mankind that such things are necessary. It seems to me that I should pine and die of mortification, if I thought such things were made for me. I want all of you to feel that such things were not made for you. When you go by a high fence, built up to keep out orchard-robbers, say to yourselves, "That fence was never made for me. I would not touch the man's cherries, or plums, or peaches, or melons, without leave, though they hung so that the wind would blow them in my face as I passed along the road, or though I should stumble over them in my path. I could climb the man's fence easily enough; but, thank God, I have a conscience which I never yet climbed over, and never will." If you hear a neighbor locking up his house at night, say, "That lock was not made for me. So far as I am concerned, he might leave his doors and windows wide open." If you see the vaults and safes of a great bank, say, "Those iron doors and massive

keys were never made on my account. The men may leave their gold and silver on their counters, with unbolted doors, if they please. It is none of mine, and I would rather lay my hand on a red-hot poker than to touch it." Do this, children, and you will feel honest, clear through you,—honest from head to foot; and be able to stand up straight, and look any man in the face, and fear no accuser, and never turn pale. You will not be like a poor, wretched, slinking thief, who cannot eat nor sleep in peace; who always thinks there is an officer at his back, and into whose ear every rustling leaf and whispering breeze cries, "Stop thief."

*You must be religious*; that is, you must be grateful to God, obey his laws, love and imitate his infinite excellences. The works of God are full of wonders and beauties. He has laid the foundations of the universe in miracles, and filled it with starry splendors. But God himself is greater than his works. If you were delighted and charmed with a curious instrument, or with a piece of exquisitely wrought machinery, would you not like to know its contriver and builder?—especially if his ingenious mind and skilful hand could form a thousand such masterpieces in a day? If you were so captivated by a book, that, after reading it through a score of times, you still would turn back its pages and commence it again with ever-renewing delight, should you not like to know the author of that book?—especially if you had learned that every word from his lips was like a fresh-glowing picture, and that all the tones of his voice were enchanting music, and that every aspect of his counte-

nance would thrill with admiration and love? Such, and more than this, and more than the tongue of man or of angel can describe, is your Maker; and he who does not know him, though he may know everything else, is ignorant of the greatest and best part of all knowledge. There is no other conceivable privation to be compared with an ignorance of our Creator. If a man be blind, he but loses the outward light. If a man be deaf, he but loses music and the sweet converse of friends. If a man be bereaved of companions, and the nearest and dearest kindred are plucked from his bosom; if he be persecuted and imprisoned, and torn limb from limb, by the hatred and malice of men, he is only beneath a temporary cloud, which will pass away like the vapor of the morning. But if he is "without God," he is a wanderer and a solitary in the universe, with no haven or hope before him, when beaten upon by the storms of fate; with no home or sanctuary to flee to, though all the spirits of darkness should have made him their victim.

These things, my dear children, and such as these, you were made for. You were made for them, as the rich corn and the delicious fruits were made to grow in the fertile valleys; and may your own efforts, encouraged and aided by divine goodness, enable you to fulfil the purposes of your creation. Remember, though man sinned, Paradise was not destroyed. The sinner was driven from Eden, but Eden itself remained. It can be entered again. You can enter it and make it your own.

I am, Mr. Superintendent, and dear children, very truly and faithfully, your friend,      HORACE MANN.

**PART IV**  
**IDEAS AND IDEALS**



## PART IV

### IDEAS AND IDEALS

The mind of Horace Mann ranged far and wide. He was interested in the whole of life and in people of all kinds and conditions. He was a careful observer, thought deeply, and wrote or spoke with insight on a wide variety of topics. He had an aptitude for getting at the heart of the matter and for finding some homely illustration that appealed to the experience of his listeners. His writings are so rich that it is difficult to leave any of them out. Almost any paragraph contains a sentence that may stand alone. This quality of Horace Mann's writings was recognized by the publication in 1867 of a book of quotations selected from his writings and issued under the title *Thoughts from the Writings of Horace Mann.*

#### *Life and Character*

*On the Dignity of Man*—Man is not a savage or a pauper by the inexorable fatality of his nature. He is surrounded with every form of the truest and noblest wealth—wealth, or well-being, for the body, wealth for the mind, wealth for the heart. He is not of plebeian origin, but his lineage is from God; and when he asserts and exemplifies the dignity of his nature, royal and patrician titles shrink into nothingness. . . . The laws of

nature and of God doom no man to live on a potato a day; but the productive powers of the earth are as much beyond all the demands of healthful sustenance, as the volume of the atmosphere . . . is beyond the capacity of human lungs. Men were not created to live in wigwams nor sties; but to rise up and to lie down in dwellings of comfort and elegance. Men were not created . . . for alms-houses and the gallows, but for competence, and freedom, and virtue; not for thoughtless puerilities and vanities, but for dignity and honor, for joy unspeakable and full of glory.—From *Thoughts for a Young Man*.

*All Men Created Equal*—I have been taught from my earliest childhood that “all men are created equal.” This has become to me not merely a conviction of the understanding, but a sentiment of the heart. This maxim is my principle of action . . . and it rises spontaneously to my contemplations when I speculate upon human duty. It is the plainest corollary from the doctrine of the natural equality of man, that when I see a man, or a class of men, who are not equal to myself in opportunities, in gifts, in means of improvement, or in motives and incitements to an elevated character and an exemplary life,—I say, it is the plainest corollary that I should desire to elevate those men to an equality with myself.—From *Thoughts from the Writings of Horace Mann*.

*Capacity for Improvement*—I hold all past achievements of the human mind to be rather in the nature of prophecy than of fulfilment;—the first-fruits of the beneficence of God, in endowing us with the faculties

of perception, comparison, calculation, and causality, rather than the full harvest of their eventual development. . . . And if we believe in our individual capacity for indefinite improvement, why should we doubt the capacity of the race for continued progress, as long as it dwells upon the earth?—From the *Twelfth Annual Report*.

*Greatness*—There are other standards of greatness besides vastness of territory, and other forms of wealth besides mineral deposits or agricultural exuberance. Though every hill were a Potosi, though every valley, like that of the Nile, were rank with fatness, yet might a nation be poor in the most desperate sense—benighted in the darkness of barbarism, and judgment-stricken of Heaven for its sins. A state has local boundaries which it cannot rightfully transcend; but the realm of intelligence, the sphere of charity, the moral domain in which the soul can expand and expatiate, are illimitable—vast and boundless as the omnipresence of the Being that created them. Worldly treasure is of that nature that rust may corrupt, or the moth destroy, or thieves steal; but, even upon the earth, there are mental treasures which are unapproachable by fraud, impregnable to violence, and whose value does not perish, but is redoubled with the using.—From the *Twelfth Annual Report*.

*A New Race*—The gay, guileless, thoughtless young!—the young, ignorant, yet needing all knowledge to save them from harm; thoughtful only of the present moment,

yet embarked on the voyage of eternity; too careless to save a toy, yet intrusted with infinite treasures; blind, though environed with perils; as unconscious of the glorious enthusiasm or of the terrible passions that lie sleeping in their bosoms, as is the cloud of the tempest and the lightning which it unwraps in its folds,—it is of these precious, immortal beings, that we say, “HERE IS A NEW RACE: BEGIN ONCE MORE!”—From the *Common School Journal*, 1845.

*On War*—The reason why the abominations of war are so little deplored, in this boasted age of light, is, because children have been educated for war, brought up to honor it, from the time when their little hands could marshal a file of tin soldiers in the nursery, or rub-a-dub a drum round the door-yard, to the time when they themselves have put on the piebald, harlequin livery of a soldier, to be gazed at by other children, as much less silly than themselves as they are less advanced in years. In this way, before they came to years of discretion, their habits had been fixed by others, who, though they may have arrived at the years, have missed the discretion that belongs to them.—From the *Common School Journal*, 1846.

*Posterity*—Clear and more clear, out of the dimness of coming time, emerge, to the vision of faith, the myriad hosts of the generations that shall succeed us. These generations are to stand in our places, to be called by our names, and to accept the heritage of joy or of woe which we shall bequeath them. Shall they look back

upon us with veneration for our wisdom and beneficent forecast, or with shame at our selfishness and degeneracy? Our ancestors were noble examples to us; shall we be ignoble examples to our posterity? They gave from their penury, and shall we withhold from our abundance? Let us not dishonor our lineage. Let us remember that generosity is not to be measured by the largeness of the sum which a man may give, but by the smallness of the sum which remains to him after his gift. Let us remember that the fortunes of our children and of their descendants hang upon our fidelity, just as our fortunes were suspended upon the fidelity of our fathers—From the *Twelfth Annual Report*.

*Live for others.* Great boons, such as can only be won by great labors, are to be secured; great evils are to be vanquished. Nothing to-day prevents this earth from being a paradise but error and sin. These errors, these sins, you must assail. The disabilities of poverty; the pains of disease; the enervations and folly of fashionable life; the brutishness of appetite, and the demonisms of passion; the crowded vices of cities, thicker than their inhabitants; the retinue of calamities that come through ignorance; the physical and moral havoc of war; the woes of intemperance; the wickedness of oppression, whether of the body or of the soul; the Godlessness and Christlessness of bigotry,—these are the hosts against which a war of extermination is to be waged, and you are to be the warriors.—From the *Baccalaureate Address*, delivered at Antioch College, 1859.

*Temptation*—The most formidable attribute of temptation is its increasing power, its accelerating ratio of velocity. Every act of repetition increases power, diminishes resistance. It is like the letting out of waters,—where a drop can go, a river can go. Whoever yields to temptation, subjects himself to the law of falling bodies.—From *Thoughts from the Writings of Horace Mann*.

*On Being a Lawyer*—Perpetually ask “What is equitable? What is just? What is right?” . . . Never espouse the wrong side of a cause knowingly. . . . It is utterly amazing to me how a man can trifle with his own mind . . . I well know . . . what the old lawyers say about its being right to defend a known wrong side. I deny it all, and despise it. If a bad man wants such work done, he shall not have my soul to do it with. I should not like to catch the smallpox, but that would be a tolerable disease, rather than to let a scoundrel inoculate me with his villainy. Because he has committed violation Number One, shall I commit violation Number Two, to secure impunity to him by means of what is called a *Court of Justice*? which impunity, of course, is violation Number Three, brought about by the wrongful use of *his* money and the prostitution of *my* faculties.—From a letter to a student at law, July 23, 1852.

*Uses of Authority*—No parent or teacher should ever issue a command without the highest degree of certainty that it will be obeyed. To command a child to do or to abstain from doing what, under the circumstances, he will probably refuse to do or to abstain from doing, is as

false to duty as it would be in a general to engage, voluntarily, in a battle when he was exposed to certain defeat. . . . Present no temptation to the child which he has not strength to overcome. Let the temptation be increased only as the power of resistance is strengthened.

—From the *Common School Journal*, 1840.

*To Boys*—Do not trouble the birds. Let them sing and fly without fear from you. Do not kill them, do not catch and imprison them. Let them go abroad in all the joyousness of their brief summer's life. If you wish for something to do in the spring days, dig a hole in some suitable place by the road-side, three or four feet across and a foot and a half deep; throw back part of the earth; then go into the fields or woods, catch a wild tree, the prettiest you can find, and fasten its roots carefully in the cage that you have made for them, and your children's children, or the poor wayfaring man, a century hence, may thank you for the shade which you have provided. Is not this better than catching birds?

—From *Thoughts from the Writings of Horace Mann*

*Good Behavior*—Manners easily and rapidly mature into morals. As childhood advances to manhood, the transition from bad manners to bad morals is almost imperceptible. . . . What was originally only a word or a phrase becomes a thought, is meretriciously embellished by the imagination, is inflamed into a vicious desire gains strength and boldness by being always made welcome, until at last, under some urgent temptation, it dares for once, to put on the visible form of action; it is then

ventured upon again and again, more frequently and less warily, until repetition forges the chains of habit; and then language, imagination, desire and habit bind their victim in the prison-house of sin. . . . So, on the other hand, purity and chasteness of language tend to preserve purity and chasteness of thought and of taste; they repel licentious imaginings; they delight in the unsullied and the untainted, and all their tendencies and aptitudes are on the side of virtue.—From *Thoughts from the Writings of Horace Mann*.

*On High Ideals*—How unworthy the sacred office of a teacher, if he incites his pupils to effort, only by displaying before them a brilliant prospect of worldly honors and distinctions . . . while he neglects to cherish the love of man in their bosoms, or to display before them daily the evidences of the goodness and the wisdom of God! . . . A life spent in obscurity and supported by daily toil may be full of blessings; but no worldly honors however high, or wealth however boundless, can atone for one dereliction from duty in acquiring them.—From the *Ninth Annual Report*.

*The Sovereignty of Truth*—Truths, no matter how momentous or enduring, are nothing to the individual until he appreciates them, and feels their force, and acknowledges their sovereignty. He cannot bow to their majesty until he sees their power. All the blind, then, and all the ignorant,—that is, all the children,—must be educated up to the point of perceiving and

admitting truth, and acting according to its mandates.—  
From *Thoughts from the Writings of Horace Mann.*

### *Schools and Education*

*Q.*

*Education*—If ever there was a cause, if ever there can be a cause, worthy to be upheld by all of toil or sacrifice that the human hand or heart can endure, it is the cause of Education. It has intrinsic and indestructible merits. It holds the welfare of mankind in its embrace, as the protecting arms of a mother hold her infant to her bosom. The very ignorance and selfishness which obstruct its path are the strongest arguments for its promotion, for it furnishes the only adequate means for their removal.—From the *Common School Journal*, 1842.

*Q.*

*Material Importance of Education*—No race of bondmen, smothered in the ignorance essential to slavery, can ever earn so much by their muscles as they could earn by their wits, had they been educated and free. The hand is almost valueless at one end of the arm unless there is a brain at the other end.—From an Address at Antioch College, *Demands of the Age on Colleges*.

*Every Individual's Right to Education*—I believe in the existence of a great, immortal, immutable principle of natural law, or natural ethics,—a principle antecedent to all human institutions, and incapable of being abrogated by any ordinances of man,—a principle of divine origin, clearly legible in the ways of Providence as those ways are manifested in the order of nature, and in the

history of the race, which proves the *absolute right* to an education of every human being that comes into the world; and which, of course, proves the correlative duty of every government to see that the means of that education are provided for all. . . . Under our republican government, it seems clear that the minimum of this education can never be less than such as is sufficient to qualify each citizen for the civil and social duties he will be called to discharge;—such an education as teaches the individual the great laws of bodily health; as qualifies for the fulfilment of parental duties; as is indispensable for the civil functions of a witness or juror; as is necessary for the voter in municipal and in national affairs; and, finally, as is requisite for the faithful and conscientious discharge of all those duties which devolve upon the inheritor of a portion of the sovereignty of this great Republic.—From the *Tenth Annual Report*.

*The Common School*—The Common School is the greatest discovery ever made by man. In two grand, characteristic attributes, it is supereminent over all others;—first, in its universality;—for it is capacious enough to receive and cherish in its parental bosom every child that comes into the world; and second, in the timeliness of the aid it proffers;—its early, seasonable supplies of counsel and guidance making security antedate danger. Other social organizations are curative and remedial; this is a preventive and an antedote; they come to heal diseases and wounds; this, to make the physical and moral frame invulnerable to them. Let the

common school be expanded to its capabilities, let it be worked with the efficiency of which it is susceptible, and nine-tenths of the crimes in the penal code will become obsolete; the long catalogue of human ills will be abridged; men will walk more safely by day; every pillow will be more inviolable by night; property, life, and character will be held by a stronger tenure; all rational hopes respecting the future brightened.—From the *Common School Journal*, 1841.

*On a Momentous Question*—The all-important question still remains: by what spirit are our schools animated? Do they cultivate the higher faculties in the nature of childhood—its conscience, its benevolence, a reverence for whatever is true and sacred? Or are they only developing upon a grander scale, the lower instincts and selfish tendencies of the race? . . . Knowing as we do that the foundations of national greatness can be laid only in the industry, the integrity, and the spiritual elevation of the people, are we equally sure that our schools are forming the character of the rising generation upon the everlasting principles of duty and humanity? . . . It becomes, then, a momentous question, whether the children in our schools are educated in reference to themselves and their private interests only, or with a regard to the great social duties and prerogatives that await them in after-life.—From the *Ninth Annual Report*.

*The great object of the schools*—an object dear to the heart of every lover of his kind—is, to exercise and

to strengthen the minds of the children; to save them from vicious associations and from depraved habits; to lead them to the perception and the love of truth in the exact sciences; to give them a delight in exploring the vast world of natural history, where, at every step, they are surrounded by proofs of the greatness and goodness of God; and thus to prepare them, as far as by any human means they can be prepared, to bring a clearer and stronger mind and less selfish and impure affections, a more ardent love of man and a higher reverence for God, to the decision of those momentous questions of time and eternity which in the last resort each man must not only decide for himself, but must abide the consequences of his decision.—From *Thoughts from the Writings of Horace Mann*.

*Influence of a Good Teacher*—To save a considerable portion of the rising generation from falling back into the condition of half-civilized or savage life, what other instrumentality does society afford than to send into every obscure and hidden district in the state a young man or a young woman, whose education is sound; whose language is well-selected; whose pronunciation and tones of voice are correct and attractive; whose manners are gentle and refined; all of whose topics of conversation are elevating and instructive; whose benignity of heart is constantly manifested in acts of civility, courtesy and kindness; and who spreads a nameless charm over whatever circle may be entered. Such a person should the teacher of every common school be.

*Raw Material*—Put a man into a factory, as ignorant how to prepare fabrics as some teachers are to watch the growth of juvenile minds, and what havoc would be made of the raw material.—From *Thoughts from the Writings of Horace Mann*.

*Duty of the Teacher*—When the teacher fails to meet the intellectual wants of a child, it is the case of asking for bread and receiving a stone; but when he fails to meet its moral wants, it is giving a serpent.—From *Thoughts from the Writings of Horace Mann*.

*Teaching, An Art*—Teaching is the most difficult of all arts, and the profoundest of all sciences. In its absolute perfection, it would involve a complete knowledge of the whole being to be taught, and of the precise manner in which every possible application would affect it.—From the *First Annual Report*.

*On Normal Schools*—I believe Normal Schools to be a new instrumentality in the advancement of the race. I believe that, without them, Free Schools themselves would be shorn of their strength and their healing power, and would at length become mere charity schools, and thus die out in fact and in form. Neither the art of printing, nor the trial by jury, nor a free press, nor free suffrage, can long exist, to any beneficial and salutary purpose, without schools for the training of teachers; for, if the character and qualifications of teachers be allowed to degenerate, the Free Schools will become pauper schools, and the pauper schools will pro-

duce pauper souls, and the free press will become a false and licentious press, and ignorant voters will become venal voters, and through the medium and guise of republican forms, an oligarchy . . . . will govern the land; nay, the universal diffusion and ultimate triumph of all-glorious Christianity itself must await the time when knowledge shall be diffused among men through the instrumentality of good schools. Coiled up in this institution, as in a spring, there is a vigor, whose uncoiling may wheel the spheres.—From an address at the dedication of the Bridgewater Normal Schoolhouse, 1846.

*To Normal School Students*—You have enjoyed, or are enjoying, advantages superior to most of those engaged in our Common Schools. Never pride yourselves upon these advantages. Think of them often, but always as motives to greater diligence and exertion, not as points of superiority. As you go forth, after having enjoyed the bounty of the State, you will probably be subjected to a rigid examination. Submit to it without complaint. More will sometimes be demanded of you than is reasonable. Bear it meekly and exhaust your time and strength in performing your duties, rather than in vindicating your rights. Bear and forbear, not defending yourselves, so much as trusting to your works to defend you. Yet, in counseling you thus, I would not be understood to be a total non-resistant,—a perfectly passive, non-elastic sand-bag in society; but I would not have you resist until the blow be aimed, not so much

at you, as, through you, at the sacred cause of human improvement, in which you are engaged,—a point at which forbearance would be allied to crime.—From an address at the dedication of the Bridgewater Normal Schoolhouse, 1846.

*On Teachers Meetings*—The teacher who has met a hundred of his fellow-teachers in a public assembly, and communed with them for days, enlightening his own judgment by the results of their experience, and kindling his own enthusiasm by their fires, goes back to his schoolroom with the light of a hundred minds in his head, and with the zeal of a hundred bosoms burning in his heart. . . . At meetings like this, whatever wisdom the country possesses on the subject of education may be brought into common stock, and, by self-multiplying process, the whole of it may be carried away by each individual. . . . By a national organization of teachers, great and comprehensive plans may be devised.—From an address before a convention of teachers and superintendents at Philadelphia, October 17, 1849.

*On State Leadership*—I see those around me who have been engaged in the great work of organizing systems of education for a state. I see those on whom has devolved the statesmanlike duty of projecting plans of improvement for a whole people around them, and for generations after them, where a mistake would bring calamity to the most precious and enduring interests of mankind, and where wisdom and genius would throw forward their light and happiness into coming centuries;

and I know I shall have their assent when I say that no position in human life could impose more anxiety and solicitude and toil upon its possessor than the perilous position they have occupied. Without guide, without precedent, without counsel, they have had no helpers but in their own forethought, fidelity, and devotion. How cheering and sustaining to them must be such opportunities as the present (convention).—Address at a convention of teachers and superintendents, Philadelphia, October 17, 1849.

*Libraries in Common Schools*—The benefit of libraries in common schools is a modern discovery. But it is one which is destined to increase, almost indefinitely, the efficiency of those schools. . . . Good books are to the young mind what the warming sun and the refreshing rain of spring are to the seeds which have lain dormant in the frosts of winter. They are more, for they may save from that which is worse than death, as well as bless with that which is better than life.—From *Thoughts from the Writings of Horace Mann*.

*The Teacher and Society*—In our own country, where many paths, all brilliant with the trophies of opulence and renown, allure the youth of the land, there is no other way to secure a fair proportion of the genius and erudition of the community for the department of teaching, than to require its services with a fair share of all the honors and emoluments which society has to confer. And never, until this is done, shall we see the teacher in possession of his rights, and education fully invested

with its high prerogatives.—From the *Common School Journal*, 1844.

*Treason of Colleges*—What an enormity it is that our Colleges which annually send forth hundreds of young men to the rostrum, the forum, and the pulpit, should ever be guilty of overt acts of treason against the highest welfare of the community by fitting depraved men for positions of emolument and power.—Baccalaureate address of 1857 at Antioch College.

*Q. Ignorance, a Crime*—The experience of the ages that are past . . . . enjoin upon us a more earnest, a more universal, a more religious devotion of our energies and resources to the culture of the youthful mind and heart of the nation. Their gathered voices assert the eternal truth, that, IN A REPUBLIC, IGNORANCE IS A CRIME; AND THAT PRIVATE IMMORALITY IS NOT LESS AN OPPROBRIUM TO THE STATE THAN IT IS GUILT IN THE PERPETRATOR.—From the *Seventh Annual Report*.

*On Spiritual Education*—But, notwithstanding all I have said of the value of education, in a pecuniary sense, and of its power to improve and elevate the outward domestic and social condition of all men, yet, in closing this report, I should do injustice to my feelings, did I abstain from declaring that to my own mind, this tribute to its worth, however well deserved, is still the faintest note of praise which can be uttered, in honor of so noble a theme; and that, however deserving of attention may

be the *economical* view of the subject which I have endeavored to present, yet it is one that dwindles into insignificance when compared with those loftier and more sacred attributes of the cause, which have the power of converting material wealth into spiritual well-being, and of giving to its possessor lordship and sovereignty, alike over the temptations of adversity, and the . . . dangerous seducements of prosperity.—From the *Fifth Annual Report*.

*Education and National Prosperity*—For the creation of wealth . . . intelligence is the grand condition. . . . In former times . . . not one man in a million has ever had such a development of mind as made it possible for him to become a contributor to art or science. Let this development precede, and contributions, numberless, and of inestimable value, will be sure to follow. That political economy, therefore, which busies itself about capital and labor, supply and demand, interest and rents, favorable and unfavorable balances of trade, but leaves out of account the element of a widespread mental development, is naught but stupendous folly.—From the *Twelfth Annual Report*.

*Teachers, a Living Lesson*—If children are not systematically instructed in the duties they now owe, as sons and daughters, as brothers and sisters, as school-fellows and associates;—in the duties also which they will so soon owe, when, emerging from parental restraint and becoming a part of the sovereignty of the state, they will be enrolled among the arbiters of a nation's destiny; is

not the importance immeasurably augmented of employing teachers, who will, themselves, be a living lesson to their pupils, of decorous behavior, of order, of magnanimity, of justice, of affection; and who, if they do not directly teach the principles, will still, by their example, transfuse and instil something of the sentiment of virtue?—From *Thoughts from the Writings of Horace Mann.*

***Education for Democracy***—If those momentous questions are ever to be correctly decided, which, for ages past, have been submitted to the rack, the fagot, and the dungeon, and they could not decide,—which the blood of all the martyrs has failed to decide,—which the power of kings, aided by the wealth of nations, has failed to decide;—if these questions are ever to be correctly decided, without supernatural agency, it must be by each party's laying aside its exclusiveness, its pride, its infallibility, its contempt, and, by the union of all in some noble plan, to give to another generation fitter attainments, greater capacities, and that without which all other means are worthless—minds free from prejudice, and yearning after truth.—From the *Common School Journal*, 1841.

***The American Statesman***—In our country, and in our times, no man is worthy the honored name of a statesman, who does not include the highest practicable education of the people in all his plans of administration. He may have eloquence, he may have a knowledge of all history, diplomacy, jurisprudence; and by these he might

claim, in other countries, the elevated rank of a statesman; but, unless he speaks, plans, labors, at all times and in all places, for the culture and edification of the whole people, he is not, he cannot be, an American statesman.—From a Lecture, *The Necessity of Education in a Republican Government*, 1838.

*Errors of Education*—The unpardonable error of education has been, that it has not begun with simple truths, with elementary ideas, and risen by gradations to combined results. It has begun with teaching systems, rules, schemes, complex doctrines, which years of analysis would scarcely serve to unfold. All is administered in a mass. The learner, not being able to comprehend, has endeavored to remember, and thus has been put off with a fact, in lieu of a principle explanatory of an entire class of facts. In this way we pass our errors and our truths over to our successors done up in the same bundle, they to others, and so onward, to be perpetual sources of error, alienation, and discord.—From *Thoughts from the Writings of Horace Mann*.

### *Democracy and Citizenship*

*On the Choice Eternal*—Are not the sufferings of past ages, are not the cries of expiring nations . . . a summons sufficiently loud to reach our ears and to rouse us to apply a remedy for the present, an antidote for the future? We shall answer these questions by the way in which we educate the rising generation. ~~If we~~ do not

prepare children to become good citizens—if we do not develop their capacities, if we do not enrich their minds with knowledge, imbue their hearts with the love of truth and duty, and a reverence for all things sacred and holy, then our republic must go down to destruction, as others have gone before it; and mankind must sweep through another vast cycle of sin and suffering, before the dawn of a better era can arise upon the world. It is for our government, and for that public opinion which in a republic governs the government, to choose between these alternatives of weal or woe.—From the *Eighth Annual Report*.

Education is our only political safety. Outside of this ark all is deluge.—From *Thoughts from the Writings of Horace Mann*.

*Action of Government in Education*—How poor was the gift of Midas, fabled to possess the power of turning whatever he touched into gold, compared with the power of turning gold into knowledge, and wisdom, and virtue! How glorious is the prerogative of the legislator when he faithfully uses his privileges for the benefit of his race! Though he fill but a brief hour of political existence, yet in that hour he can speak a word which shall enhance the happiness of posterity at the distance of a thousand years. This is the only worthy immortality upon earth—not to leave a name, to be upon the lips of men, but to do acts which shall improve the condition of men through the flowing ages.—From *Thoughts from the Writings of Horace Mann*.

*On Public Opinion*—All measures designed to promote education, must depend for their success, in this country, on the hearty cooperation of public opinion. It is only by enlightening and concentrating that opinion, that powerful effects can be produced. This is most effectually to be done by persevering appeals to the understanding of the people, by placing the subject in every proper form of argument and persuasion before the public mind, and by giving publicity to the facts, which prove the defects in the system as existing in some portions of the Commonwealth and the great excellence to which it is brought in other portions; thus encouraging a generous emulation, where nothing but good can result from the effort to excel.—From the *Third Annual Report*.

*The Strength of a Republic*—Some have thought that, in a republic, the good and wise must necessarily maintain an ascendancy over the vicious and ignorant. But whence any such moral necessity? The distinctive characteristic of a republic is the greater freedom and power of its members. A republic is a political contrivance by which the whole popular voice is collected and uttered, as one articulate and authoritative sound. If, then, the people are unrighteous, that utterance will be unrighteous. If the people, or a majority of them, withdraw their eyes from wisdom and equity,—those everlasting lights in the firmament of truth;—if they abandon themselves to party strife, where the triumph of a faction, rather than the prevalence of the right, is

made the object of contest,—it becomes as certain as are the laws of Omnipotence, that such a community will express and obey the baser will.—From the Fourth of July Oration, Boston, 1842.

*A Lesson*—Whatever statesman or sage will effect reforms upon a gigantic and godlike scale must begin with the young. He must labor in accordance with a principle which lies at the bottom of all reforms,—which prevents errors by preoccupying the ground before they invade it, and fortify themselves in it. The antidotes are so cheap that the poorest community can supply them; the remedies so costly, that they will beggar the treasury of a prince.—From the *Common School Journal*, 1847.

*Duties of Republics*—How obvious it is, that we stand in the same relation to posterity that our ancestors do to us. And, as we boldly summon our forefathers to our tribunal for adjudication upon their conduct, so will our conduct be brought into judgment by our successors. Each generation has duties of its own to perform; and our duties, though widely different from theirs, are not less important in their character, or less binding in their obligations. It was their duty to found or establish our institutions, and nobly did they perform it. It is our duty to perfect and perpetuate these institutions; and the most solemn question which can be propounded to this age is, are we performing it nobly? Shall posterity look back upon our present rulers, as we look back

upon Arnold, or as we look back upon Washington?—  
From the Fourth of July Oration, Boston, 1842.

*Education for Citizenship*—Since the achievement of American independence, the universal and ever-repeated argument in favor of free schools has been, that the general intelligence which they are capable of diffusing, and which can be imparted by no other human instrumentality, is indispensable to the continuance of a republican government.—From the *Tenth Annual Report*.

*Free Speech*—I feel nonetheless inclined to discuss the question of freedom because an order has gone forth that it shall not be discussed. Discussion has been denounced as agitation, and then it has been dictatorially proclaimed that “agitation must be put down.” Humble as I am, I submit to no such dictation, come from what quarter or what numbers it may. If such a prohibition is intended to be laid upon me personally, I repel it. If intended to silence me as the representative of the convictions and feelings of my constituents, I repel it all the more vehemently. In this government, it is not tolerable for any man, however high, or for any body of men, however large, to prescribe what subjects may be agitated, and what may not be agitated. Such prescription is at best but a species of lynch law against free speech. It is as hateful as any other form of that execrable code, and I do but express the common sentiment of all generous minds, when I say that for one, I am all the more disposed to use my privilege of speech, when imperious men, and the sycophants of imperious

men, attempt to ban or constrain me. . . . I hold treason against this government to be an enormous crime; but great as it is, I hold treason against free speech to be incomparably greater.—From *Thoughts from the Writings of Horace Mann*.

*Costs of War*—Were nations to embark in the cause of education for the redemption of mankind, as they have in that of war for their destruction, the darkest chapters in the history of earthly calamities would soon be brought to a close. But where units have been grudged for education, millions have been lavished for war. While, for the one purpose, mankind have refused to part with superfluities, for the other they have not only impoverished themselves, but levied burdensome taxes upon posterity.—From the *Eleventh Annual Report*.

*The Voting Day*—On one of those oft-recurring days, when the fate of the State or the Union is to be decided at the polls; . . . is it not enough to make the lover of his country turn pale, to reflect upon the motives under which they may be given, and the consequences to which they may lead? By the votes of a few wicked men, or even of one wicked man, honorable men may be hurled from office, and miscreants elevated to their places; useful offices abolished, and sinecures created; the public wealth, which had supported industry, squandered upon mercenaries; enterprise crippled . . . and thus capital, which had been honestly and laboriously accumulated, turned into dross;—in fine, the whole policy of

the government may be reversed, and the social condition of millions changed, to gratify one man's grudge, or prejudice, or revenge.—From the Fourth of July Oration, Boston, 1842.

*Moral or Material Advance?*—Can virtue recount as many triumphs in the moral world as intellect has won in the material? Can our advances toward perfection in the cultivation of private and domestic virtues, and in the feeling of brotherhood and kindness towards all the members of our households, bear comparison with the improvements in our dwellings, our furniture, or our equipages? Have our charities for the poor, the debased, the ignorant, been multiplied in proportion to our revenues? Have we subdued low vices, low indulgences, and selfish feelings, and have we fertilized the waste places in the human heart as extensively as we have converted the wilderness into plenteous harvest-fields, or enlisted the running waters in our service?—From the *Ninth Annual Report*.

*The True Values*—Let us not say, the pupils are intractable and incorrigible, until the teacher has ceased to be ignorant and heedless. If benevolence were half as much stimulated as the love of gain now is,—at the fireside, the table, the marketplace, and in all the walks of business,—the days of oppression and injustice would soon be numbered. If all the counsels, the examples, the institutions of the world, were as skilfully adapted to develop the conscience of the child, as they are to arouse his ambition, his love of applause and of power,

teh history of the world would be written henceforth as the history of another race.—From the *Common School Journal*, 1843.

### *Health and Happiness*

*Happiness*—It is the law of our nature to desire happiness. This law is not local, but universal; not temporary, but eternal. It is not a law to be proved by exceptions, for it knows no exception. . . . The young desire happiness more keenly than any others. This desire is innate, spontaneous, exuberant; and nothing but repeated and repeated overflows of the lava of disappointment can burn or bury it in their breasts.—From a Lecture, *Thoughts for a Young Man*.

*Duty a Happiness*—In vain do they talk of happiness who never subdued an impulse in obedience to a principle. He who never sacrificed a present to a future good, or a personal to a general one, can speak of happiness only as the blind do of colors.—From the *Common School Journal*, 1843.

*Importance of Health*—Soundness of health is preliminary to the *highest* success in any pursuit. In every industrial avocation it is an indispensable element, and the highest intellectual eminence can never be reached without it. It exerts a powerful influence over feelings, temper, and disposition, and through these upon moral character. Yet incredible as it may seem, the means of acquiring vigor, endurance, quickness, have been sought

for, not by the clergyman, the lawyer, the artist, the cultivator of letters, the mother, but by the wrestler, the buffoon, the runner, the opera-dancer. There are ten professors of pugilism in our community to one of physical education in our seminaries of learning.—From *Thoughts from the Writings of Horace Mann*.

*Life's Endowment*—Every well-constituted person is endowed with a vast fund of health and strength, at his birth; and if this has not been impaired by the ignorance or folly of his natural guardians, he brings it with him upon the stage of life. This fund of natural, inborn health and vigor may be increased, or kept at par, or squandered. The case may be likened to a deposit, in a bank, of a hundred thousand dollars, for a young man's benefit. He may make a draft upon it of five thousand dollars a year, and may repeat his draft annually, for twenty years; and because the draft is always answered, the drawer may say, "I know that this expenditure does not impair my fortune; my credit continues as good as ever. . . ." True. But the self-same act now cited to prove the exhaustlessness of the fund is the very act that drew the last cent of the deposit. . . . He who draws upon a supply that is not infinite will sooner or later reach the bottom.—From a Lecture, *Thoughts for a Young Man*.

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